

AN ANALYSIS OF LATE BRONZE AGE AEGEAN GLYPTIC MOTIFS OF A
RELIGIOUS NATURE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an analysis of glyptic motifs of a religious nature attested on the Greek mainland in the Late Helladic period and on Crete post Late Minoan IB. Its purpose is to ascertain to what extent such an analysis can, firstly, expand our knowledge of religious practices in the Late Bronze Age Aegean, and, secondly, elucidate the nature of the relationship between Minoan Crete and Mycenaean Greece.

This was achieved through the classification and analysis of five glyptic themes generally regarded as possessing religious significance in scholarship. These are anthropomorphic figures and non-anthropomorphic elements flanked by animals, seated women, figures with architecture, and animal sacrifice. This contention was critically appraised by developing a widely applicable methodology that demonstrated that many possessed religious aspects.

The comparative analysis between the glyptic iconography of the Cretan Neopalatial Period and that of the Greek mainland and post-Late Minoan IB Crete identified specific changes that occurred from *circa* 1470 BCE onwards and established which of these originated on the mainland.

As a result, I have defined a group of iconographic representations that provide specific information regarding religious practices in the Late Bronze Age Aegean and clarified the relationship between religious iconography and reality.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CMS</i>	<i>Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel</i>
EH	Early Helladic
EM	Early Minoan
<i>GGFR</i>	<i>Greek Gems and Finger Rings</i> (Boardman, 1970)
HM	Heraklion Museum
LB	Late Bronze
LBA	Late Bronze Age
LC	Late Cycladic
LH	Late Helladic
LM	Late Minoan
MH	Middle Helladic
MM	Middle Minoan

Abbreviations Used in Tables

A	Amygdaloid
C	Cushion
DA	Double Axe
HoC	Horns of Consecration
HS	Hard Stone
L	Lentoid
M	Metal
R	Ring
SS	Soft Stone

Concordance of Designations used in this Thesis and *CMS* Catalogue or Museum Inventory Numbers

Archanes Ring	HM 989
Great Goddess Ring	<i>CMS</i> I.17
Isopata Ring	<i>CMS</i> II.3.15
Kandia Ring	<i>CMS</i> VI.280
Knossos Ring	<i>CMS</i> VI.281
Master Impression	<i>CMS</i> VS.1A.142
Mochlos Ring	<i>CMS</i> II.3.252
Poros Ring	HM 1629
Sellopoulo Ring	HM 1034
Tiryas Daemon Ring	<i>CMS</i> I.179
Vapheio Ring	<i>CMS</i> I.219

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Aims

This thesis presents an analysis of five glyptic themes that are attested on the Greek mainland in the LH period and on Crete after LM IB.¹ These themes are anthropomorphic figures flanked by animals, elements such as pillars flanked by animals, seated women, standing figures with architecture of different types, and animal sacrifice. These themes are generally assigned religious significance in the scholarly literature.²

The first aim of this thesis is to ascertain to what extent these themes relate to religious ideas and how far they can expand our knowledge of religious practices in the LBA Aegean. Intertwined with this is the need to clarify the connection between glyptic iconography and real rituals, by critically examining the theory that some artefacts depict rituals that were performed in reality.

My second principal aim is to outline and account for the temporal changes that occurred in the iconography of my selected motifs. The glyptic material from the mainland in the LH period is combined with that from Crete after LM IB. This is compared and contrasted with the glyptic evidence from Crete that dates to MM IIIB-LM IB, which I hereafter refer to as the Neopalatial Period. The comparative analysis will establish the extent to which the glyptic iconography of LM/LH II-III was built upon that of the Neopalatial Period. This is achieved by identifying specific changes that occurred in LM/LH II-III, which include the formation of new motifs. I ascertain

¹ The end of LM IB corresponds to approximately 1470/60 in the absolute chronology suggested by Manning (2010: 23). All dates provided in this thesis are BCE.

² A review of the literature relevant to each of my selected motifs is provided in **1.2**.

the probable origin of these developments, some of which may lie in the Near East; an objective of this thesis is to clarify the nature and extent of the impact this influence had upon the motifs discussed.³ This analysis will also highlight the changes that were specific to the mainland, thereby emphasising the Mycenaean contribution to the glyptic repertoire. This study additionally intends to demonstrate that the motifs that were engraved upon the rings and seals were significant, and that they had been consciously chosen by the artefacts' owners. Finally, each chapter addresses a number of objectives that are specific to each motif, which are introduced in **1.2**.

These aims will be achieved through the development of a widely applicable methodological approach for selecting, classifying, and interpreting glyptic material. I also provide descriptions of every scene included within my themes, many of which have not been widely studied.

1.1.2 Outline of Sources and Key Bibliography

My source is glyptic iconography, that is, the designs that appear upon seals, rings, and sealings. The latter term refers to pieces of clay that were impressed by a seal or ring.⁴ More than 10,000 of these artefacts have been discovered, in regions encompassing the Greek mainland, Crete, the Cyclades, the Dodecanese, and beyond. This medium has been exploited by researchers for more than a century, since Evans' (1901) study of Mycenaean religion, which demonstrates the viability of utilising glyptic as a source.

³ In this thesis, I use the term 'Near East' to refer to Syro-Palestine, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia. Specific regions are named when relevant.

⁴ In this thesis, the term 'sealings' in the plural can refer to either multiple sealings impressed by the same seal-type or to artefacts that have been impressed by a number of different seal-types. These are distinguished when necessary. When I refer to a single sealing, this indicates that only one attestation of the seal-type is known.

The starting point for this study is the thirteen volumes of the *Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel* (hereafter *CMS*), in which the vast majority of the known seals, rings, and sealings have been published. These volumes are organised by the museums or collections in which the artefacts are housed, from *CMS* I (the National Archaeological Museum at Athens, published in 1964) to *CMS* XIII (the museums and collections of North America). Each unique ‘seal-type’ is given its own catalogue number, by which it is referred to in this thesis. The term ‘seal-type’ refers to the design that appears upon a seal, ring, or sealing. This system allows multiple sealings bearing the same seal-type to be assigned the same number. Some of these seal-types are better known by designations other than those assigned to them by the *CMS*; I use these names here, to allow the scenes to be easily recognisable.⁵ A very small number of artefacts referred to in this thesis were placed in the Heraklion Museum after the publication of the associated catalogues, such as the finds from Poros. These are generally referred to by their Heraklion Museum inventory number.

The final volume of the *CMS* series, which catalogues the collection in the Ashmolean Museum, was published in 2009.⁶ In 2011, the entire *CMS* archive was made available online as part of the central object database of the German Archaeological Institute (ARACHNE).⁷ Illustrations of all the seal-types discussed in this thesis can be found in this database (<http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=en/node/196>), which is organised by *CMS* volume. Each entry includes a photograph of the seal, ring, or sealing, and a drawing of the seal-type in

⁵ For example, I.17 (the seventeenth seal-type published in the first volume of the *CMS*) is here referred to as the Great Goddess Ring. A list of these artefacts can be found in the Abbreviations.

⁶ The examples in this volume, as well as those in the Giamalakis Collection in the Heraklion Museum, which were published in Volume III (2007), are here referred to by their new *CMS* numbers.

⁷ An overview of the ARACHNE project is available at <http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=en/node/3>. Krzyszkowska (2005: 341-348) provides a user’s guide to the physical copies of the *CMS*.

impression, which is the clearest way in which to view the design. The artefacts' material, shape, provenance, and contexts are also presented. Unless otherwise stated, all the information regarding these aspects provided in this thesis derives from this database. The *CMS* number therefore serves as a reference to the source of this information.

In addition to the material published by the *CMS*, several key studies of glyptic have been written that provide a firm foundation upon which the analysis undertaken in this thesis is based. Principal among these is Krzyszkowska's (2005) *Aegean Seals: An Introduction*, which contains a detailed outline of glyptic development.⁸ Other important works include those published in the *CMS Beiheft* series.⁹ Crowley (2013: 10-11) provides a concise outline of the scholarship of the study of Aegean glyptic iconography of the Bronze Age from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day.

Further key bibliographic resources include the many studies of Aegean religion, including those of Nilsson (1950) and Marinatos (1993). Many significant articles discussing aspects of Minoan and Mycenaean religion have also been published in the *AEAGAEUM* series, a number of which utilise glyptic iconography.¹⁰ This material, therefore, has a very long bibliography. Nonetheless, the recent publication of the final *CMS* volumes, in addition to the fact that the catalogues are now readily available online, demonstrates that this is the optimum time to undertake a thorough comparative

⁸ This to some extent supersedes Boardman's (1970) tome *Greek Gems and Finger Rings*.

⁹ This series publishes the proceedings of the Internationales Siegel-Symposia, which are themed around particular aspects of glyptic.

¹⁰ The *AEAGAEUM* volumes publish the proceedings of conferences on the subject of Aegean archaeology organised by the University of Liège. The volume *POTNIA* (2001) is dedicated to Aegean religion, whereas *EIKQN* (1992) presents articles on a range of subjects relating to the theme of iconography, several of which discuss glyptic. The proceedings of the International Symposia at the Swedish Institute in Athens have also been published in a number of important volumes, including *Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (1990). Lupack (2010a; 2010b) provides an outline of the state of the research regarding Minoan and Mycenaean religion.

analysis of the material.¹¹

1.1.3 Introduction to the Analysis

I have chosen five different glyptic themes with religious characteristics, here termed ‘motif-groups’, into which I have organised almost one-hundred-and-fifty seal-types of LM II-III or LH date. These are sub-divided into eleven different sub-groups, each of which represents a motif. The examples included in these sub-groups are artefacts that share the same key iconographic elements. The term ‘element’ refers to the smallest constituent iconographic part of a representation. This can be an anthropomorphic figure, an animal, a floating symbol, or an item of architecture. These elements together make up the ‘scene’, which encompasses the entirety of the seal- or ring-face.

When repeated scenes occur, with many of the same iconographic elements, it is referred to as a ‘motif’. I use this term very broadly, which permits a high level of variation between a motif’s different attestations. As such, artefacts that have slightly different elements or that arrange the elements in a different manner can be labelled as carrying the same motif. All examples, however, must have the same constituent iconographic units; these units are the name by which the motif is designated in this thesis. Motifs sharing a similar theme or iconographic arrangement are clustered together under the term ‘motif-group’. Therefore, the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals form one motif-group.

The identification of the different elements within a scene is significantly aided by comparative analysis, as Pini (1992a: 12-18) emphasises. Many of the elements that

¹¹ The same point is made by Crowley (2013: 8) in her recent study.

appear in the scenes discussed are not unique to specific motifs, which means that I often refer to glyptic scenes not categorised in this thesis. In certain instances, it will be productive to draw parallels with the iconography of other media, particularly wall-paintings,¹² in addition to ivory carving, gold-work, and stone vessels.¹³ Many of the elements, and some of the motifs, that appear in glyptic are attested in these media.

The discussion of each motif in the chapters begins with an analysis of the mainland evidence, which is combined with the post-LM IB examples from Crete and other islands, if relevant. Every scene is discussed as a composite but many contain individual elements that warrant further analysis, such as particular symbols; the locations of these discussions within the thesis are provided below. Parallels with other media are included within the main examination of the motifs, in order to facilitate comparison.

In this first part of the analysis I also assign the artefacts dates of manufacture. I use only pottery contexts and no absolute dates, in keeping with the convention of the subject.¹⁴ Generally, I do not attempt to distinguish between mainland and Cretan artefacts in LM/LH II-III A, unless there are clear iconographic or other indications of their provenance. Artefacts that do not derive from narrowly datable contexts are assigned broad dates through iconographic comparison with artefacts that can be more

¹² Wall-paintings in the LBA have been thoroughly outlined by Immerwahr (1990) and Lang (1969), who primarily deals with those from Pylos. Additionally, McCallum's (1987) thesis focuses upon the wall-paintings from the megaron complex of the palace at Pylos, whereas that of Cameron (1975) provides an incredibly detailed guide to the wall-paintings of Knossos. I also refer to wall-paintings from Xeste 3 in Akrotiri on Thera at various points in this thesis. I do not regard Thera art as Minoan, but as heavily influenced by Minoan culture (Dumas, 2010: 757-758).

¹³ I do not draw comparisons with larnax decoration, which generally belongs to a later period than the glyptic iconography discussed here. The exception is the LM IIIA Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus, which is referred to in relation to animal sacrifice in Chapter 6. An analysis of the iconography of the Tanagra larnakes is provided by Cavanagh & Mee (1995).

¹⁴ Crowley (2013: 8) provides a brief overview of some of the problems involved in attempting to assign dates of manufacture to artefacts. Issues regarding the dating of artefacts from secure provenances are outlined in 1.3.2.

accurately dated. I use as a guide in this process the dates of manufacture assigned to most artefacts in the *CMS* catalogue, which have been updated for their inclusion in the ARACHNE database.¹⁵

In order to assess the influence of Neopalatial glyptic upon my chosen motifs, in the second part of the analysis the mainland and post-LM IB Cretan evidence is compared with that of Neopalatial Crete. I first assess which motifs were present in the Neopalatial Period. Any attestations of the motif in this period are classed as Minoan precursors, which are not included in the motif-group proper. This separation of the artefacts allows me to assess to what extent the Minoan precursors, if any existed, were adapted or altered in LM/LH II-III. By assessing the geographical distribution of the motifs after this point, I can ascertain whether these changes originated on Crete or on the mainland, thereby emphasising the Mycenaean innovations. I also propose probable origins for the motifs that were not present on Crete in the Neopalatial Period. The nature and extent of the changes after the Neopalatial Period among the eleven motifs are then compared in the Conclusion.

The analysis of each motif is followed by a table that presents select information regarding the material, shape, and excavation details of the provenanced artefacts, as well as key iconographic elements. The presentation of these artefacts in the table correlates with the order in which they are discussed in the text. This removes the need to provide specific details of contexts within the body of the chapter. I illustrate two examples of each motif for clarity, which are reproduced from the online *CMS*

¹⁵ I rarely utilise the articles produced by Younger (1983; 1984b; 1986) in his attempts to attribute pieces to stylistic groups as 'style' is a very subjective term. Crucially, we simply do not possess a sufficiently significant proportion of the total output to attempt such attributions (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 329). A critique of each of Younger's groups is provided by Krzyszkowska (2005: 326-329).

catalogue.¹⁶

1.2 My Motif-Groups: Outline and Literature Review

1.2.1 Male and Female Figures Flanked by Animals (Chapter 2)

These two motifs are more commonly known in scholarship as the ‘Master’ and ‘Mistress of Animals’ (*potnios/potnia theron*). I utilise the more neutral, descriptive terms stated above, which is consistent with the approach utilised throughout this thesis. These motifs illustrate a standing central male or female figure symmetrically flanked by animals. These animals usually form a matching pair, in terms of both species and pose. In three instances, seated women are depicted flanked by animals; these scenes are included in the seated women motif-group and are discussed in 4.3.3. My study differs from others as it places an equal weighting upon the male and female motifs.¹⁷ Barclay (2001) and Marinatos (1988b), for example, focus upon the female figures flanked by animals; the latter traces the evolution of this motif from the LBA to the Archaic Period.¹⁸

These figures are generally regarded as deities due to their ability to control animals (see 1.4.4.3). They are no longer regarded as distinct deities, that is, *the* ‘Master’ and *the* ‘Mistress of Animals’;¹⁹ these motifs are now recognised as

¹⁶ All images are taken from the Arachne database (<http://arachne.uni-koeln.de/drupal/?q=en/node/196>) and the CMS holds the copyright. In addition to illustrations, Chapter 5 includes a diagram to facilitate comparisons between different classes of architecture. Finally, four maps are presented after the Conclusion that plot the distribution of the eleven motifs geographically and temporally.

¹⁷ Bloedow (2001) considers both motifs but focuses only upon the scenes that include goats.

¹⁸ The motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals are the only ones discussed in this thesis that are clearly attested in the Archaic and Classical Greek periods, as Nilsson (1950: 506-516) emphasises, when they were frequently applied to Artemis and Apollo. However, the differences between these representations and those of the LBA, such as Artemis’ wings, indicate that the appearance of these motifs in the eighth century was a result of the newly re-established contacts between the Aegean and Syria and are not evidence of direct continuity through the Dark Ages (Coldstream, 1977: 12; Higgins, 1997: 190; *contra* Nilsson, 1950: 506-507).

¹⁹ Platon (1971: 22-25), for example, postulates the existence of *the* Goddess of Wild Goats.

iconographic arrangements that could potentially be applied to different deities (Thomas & Wedde, 2001: 12). The first aim of this chapter is to clarify this criterion of divinity, by ascertaining whether the species of animals or the method of control utilised affects the potential status of the central figures.

The second aim concerns the origins of the motifs. Male and female figures flanked by animals appeared at an early date in the Near East and it has long been accepted that they provided the original inspiration for the motifs in the Aegean (Nilsson, 1950: 255; Coldstream, 1977: 4; Marinatos, 1988b: 114-117). In recent decades, scholarship has focused upon tracing the transference of these motifs from the Near East to the Aegean. Crowley (1989a: 28-38) examines the developments that occurred in the motifs' iconography as part of a wider study of the interrelations between the Aegean, Near East, and Egypt in the Bronze Age. Iconographic transference has also been researched in depth by Aruz (2008). Barclay (2001) focuses upon the transference of the motif of female figures flanked by animals and summarises the history of this motif in Near Eastern art. Seminal studies of Near Eastern glyptic by Porada (1948) and Collon (1987) have facilitated the study of iconographic transference.

Chapter 2 aims to identify the specific contributions of Near Eastern glyptic to the motifs' iconography and, in addition, emphasises the influence of Neopalatial glyptic, which is often overlooked. This involves a brief outline of the relationship between the antithetic motif and the potentially related motifs of standing figures with single animals and seated women with animals.

The question of Near Eastern origins is also addressed in relation to the motifs outlined in Chapter 3 and some elements that appear in Chapter 4. In order to provide a context for these discussions, **2.1.2** provides a brief outline of contacts between the

Aegean and Near East. This is necessarily brief and focuses upon the presence of foreign seals in the Aegean that bear motifs or elements that have parallels in LM/LH II-III A glyptic. Trade and interconnections between the Aegean, Near East, and other regions have been studied in depth by Cline (2009)²⁰ and Aruz (2008), who provides an up-to-date account of foreign artefacts discovered in Aegean contexts, with an emphasis on glyptic sources.

1.2.2 Antithetic Animal Groups (Chapter 3)

This motif-group has a similar iconographic arrangement to that described above, as it likewise consists of a central focus flanked by a pair of usually identical animals. This motif-group contains three sub-groups, which have as their central foci pillars, plants/trees, or altars of incurved or columnar form. These elements have been selected as they are the three most frequently attested central foci in LBA Aegean glyptic. Moreover, pillars, trees, and incurved altars are all attested in cult contexts in the Neopalatial Period; an analysis of these elements as central foci will therefore contribute to an understanding of how Minoan religious symbols were later modified.²¹ Finally, through the medium of these three motifs, Chapter 3 is able to provide an analysis of several key elements of possible religious significance in the LBA Aegean, in addition to the central foci.²²

Some examples in the motif-group have been studied individually,²³ but very few scholars have attempted to classify and organise all the instances of these three

²⁰ This thesis refers to the updated version of Cline's 1994 volume *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea*.

²¹ The cult contexts in which pillars, trees, and incurved altars appear are outlined in 3.2.1, 4.1.2, and 3.4 respectively.

²² These include the figure-of-eight shield, sacral knot, and impaled triangle, which are described below.

²³ This is especially the case with the examples that include daemons, such as I.231 from Vapheio, which are briefly discussed by Rehak (1995b: 216) among others. Additionally, Evans dedicated an article to the analysis of the 'Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult' (1901), which is now very out-dated.

motifs. Notable in this regard is Crowley (1989a: 64-69, 185, 271), who includes several examples of trees and pillars flanked by animals in her study of iconographic transference. Wedde (1995: 497-501) briefly examines the structure of the antithetic animal group, but Chapter 3 is the first attempt to bring all the instances of these motifs together and to detect patterns in their relative use and distribution. One of the reasons for the motifs' neglect in the past is perhaps the high number of artefacts that need to be organised and analysed: the motif-group totals almost forty different seal-types.

The key aim of this chapter is to establish the significance of the three motifs. Evans (1901: 105-106) established the convention for regarding the pillar as an aniconic image of a deity, being followed by Persson (1942b: 42). It is now more commonly interpreted as a metonym for a palatial building (Furumark, 1965: 94; Mylonas, 1966: 175; Wright, 1994: 58-59). This chapter aims to provide the proposed connection between the pillar and palace with a firm basis, by making transparent the reasoning behind interpreting the pillar as a metonym for a larger building. It also assesses the theory proposed by several scholars that the different elements that are depicted being flanked by animals, such as pillars, trees, and anthropomorphic figures, are interchangeable.

Several different varieties of plants and trees appear as central foci in the second sub-group; this chapter provides justification for regarding this as a cohesive motif. It also appraises Crowley's (1989a: 65-68) contention that this motif is of foreign origin. Finally, Chapter 3 elucidates the nature of the relationship between the motifs of pillars and altars flanked by animals.

It is important to emphasise that this chapter focuses upon pillars, plants, and altars that are flanked by animals. The analysis of the central foci independently of the

antithetic arrangement, and in other media, is necessarily limited by space. Moreover, I do not discuss the very small number of artefacts that depict either animals in the centre of an antithetic composition²⁴ or anthropomorphic figures flanking a central focus.²⁵ With the exception of the antithetic arrangement, there are very few iconographic similarities between these different artefacts, precluding their classification as an approximately homogenous motif-group. Moreover, few of them contain any indicators of possessing a religious nature, as the antithetic arrangement itself was not intrinsically religious. This is indicated by its employment in scenes of hunting and of animals accompanied by floating symbols.²⁶

1.2.3 Seated Women (Chapter 4)

This chapter explores two motifs depicting seated women, who, for reasons outlined in 1.4.4.4, are usually regarded as goddesses. These two sub-groups encompass almost all instances of seated women in glyptic.²⁷ The first sub-group depicts seated women accompanied by one or more standing figures, who usually face the women and target them with gestures or other actions. There are insufficient differences between scenes depicting single and multiple standing figures to justify regarding them as two separate motifs. In the second sub-group the women are accompanied by single or

²⁴ Such scenes appear upon I.161 and I.172 from Mycenae, both of which depict daemons flanked by animals.

²⁵ I.131 from Mycenae, V.244 from Armeni, and VI.184 (allegedly from Knossos) depict figures flanking vegetation. On I.374 from Pylos and the unprovenanced lentoid VII.95, humans flank a lion and a daemon respectively.

²⁶ Antithetically arranged scenes of hunting appear upon II.3.133 from Nirou Chani and XI.33 from Syri. Animals and floating symbols are symmetrically represented on II.3.107 from Kalyvia and II.8.511 from Knossos, where small centrally placed figure-of-eight shields appear between pairs of goats. Symmetrical griffins with no central focus also appear as purely decorative elements on I.102 from Mycenae, I.196 from Midea, I.304 from Pylos, and II.8.188 from Knossos.

²⁷ A catalogue of occurrences of seated women in glyptic and other media is provided by Younger (1995: 171-181). I do not discuss the few instances of women seated upon creatures, such as I.167 from Mycenae and II.6.33 from Ayia Triadha. The only other two instances of seated women in LBA glyptic are the seal-types II.8.241 and II.8.243 from Knossos, which depict them with a small figure-of-eight shield and vessel respectively.

multiple creatures, which include daemons, griffins, and terrestrial animals. These animals in three instances flank the women. I include in this motif-group two figures of unclear gender; this is justified as their iconography clearly relates to that of seated women.²⁸

The motif of seated women with one or more standing figures has been discussed by Niemeier (1989: 173-174; 1990: 167-168), Wedde (1992: 195-201), and Rehak (1995a: 95-118), among others. That of seated women with animals has received less attention, being only briefly discussed by Tamvaki (1981: 211) and Rehak (1995a: 95-118), in the latter case as part of a wider discussion of seated women.

The first aim of this chapter concerns the relationship between the motif of seated women with standing figures and real religious practices, as several scholars regard these scenes as representations of enacted epiphany rituals (Hägg, 1986: 58; Niemeier, 1986: 81; 1990: 167; Marinatos, 1995: 42). **4.1.2** outlines the nature of this ritual and examines the assumption that enacted epiphany and epiphany-conjuring rituals were performed in reality, using the methodology delineated below. This chapter also examines other aspects of rituals potentially involving seated women, such as their ritual preparation and the carrying and presentation of offerings.

The second aim relates to the diachronic changes that occurred in the iconography of the motif of seated women with animals. It is possible to add a geographical element to the comparative analysis that takes place in all of the chapters, by comparing and contrasting the iconographic features of the attestations of the motif on Crete with those of the mainland in LM/LH II-III A. This evidence is supplemented with that provided by the related motif of standing women with animals.

²⁸ These examples are discussed in **4.3.1** and **4.3.3**.

1.2.4 Standing Figures with Architecture (Chapter 5)

This chapter assesses all known glyptic examples of standing figures facing or walking towards architecture. These are divided into two sub-groups based on the number of figures depicted: I first discuss scenes with multiple figures, which in several instances recall a procession, and then examples with just one figure. 5.1 outlines the justification for regarding these as two independent motifs and for viewing the architecture as serving a cult function. The term ‘architecture’ refers to large buildings as well as to smaller structures, such as altars.

The first motif has been discussed by Niemeier (1989: 167-169, 181; 1990: 166) but he restricts his analysis to ascertaining the status of the standing figures. The assessment of these scenes is most frequently included in discussions of particular rituals, specifically the procession (Wedde, 2004), which is often considered in combination with the dance (German, 2005). Wedde (2004) and German (2005) both discuss many of the large number of scenes that depict figures walking in procession or dancing, without any indications of architecture.²⁹ These scenes are excluded from this thesis as they do not contain sufficient diagnostic information to ascertain whether a religious significance is present. Moreover, there is little agreement in scholarship as to which gestures are securely indicative of a dance, with only a few exceptions (Wedde, 2004: 180). The analysis in Chapter 5 considers two potential dancing gestures.³⁰ Generally, I argue that in the scenes of multiple figures with architecture the emphasis is placed upon the procession, which can be identified with greater certainty.

²⁹ These scenes have also been discussed by Niemeier (1986). Examples include the seals I.42, I.132, and I.159, and the seal-types I.163 and I.170, all from Mycenae.

³⁰ These are the gestures of one arm raised and the other lowered (5.2.2) and of both hands placed on the hips (5.2.5). German (2005: 56, fig.69) outlines seven ‘dance steps’. As she acknowledges, however, these involve only the movement of the arms, which makes it difficult to distinguish them from stationary gestures. This point is especially pertinent to her ‘Pose G’, in which the arms are simply placed by the sides.

The second motif, with single figures, is not generally recognised as a distinct motif. The artefacts have usually been discussed in terms of the architecture depicted. Marinatos (1989) categorises and discusses the examples in which a tree appears in conjunction with the architecture. Krattenmaker (1995a), on the other hand, provides a concise background to the study of architecture in glyptic, with a focus on identifying scenes of a religious nature.

The principal aim of this chapter is to identify and categorise the different classes of architecture depicted in the two motifs. This involves the development of criteria that enable large buildings to be differentiated from smaller structures. Having identified the architecture, I determine its role within the scene, and ascertain the extent to which the rituals potentially being depicted relate to reality.

1.2.5 Motifs Relating to Animal Sacrifice (Chapter 6)

Animal sacrifice is here defined as the ritualised slaughter of an animal that was carried out in accordance with religious beliefs. Some or all of the meat was then perhaps offered to the gods, the rest being consumed.³¹ The chapter focuses upon two core motifs. The first depicts a herbivore, unanimously interpreted as a sacrificial victim, lying or standing upon a table. The second motif illustrates an animal, again always a herbivore, being carried by a woman, usually over her shoulder.³² Sakellarakis (1972) was the first to suggest that this woman is a priestess carrying a sacrificial victim, which is accepted here for reasons outlined in 6.3.

³¹ One can compare the practices of modern Islam and Judaism, in which the method of the animal's slaughter is always ritualised.

³² I do not address the rare scenes that show standing women carrying either a fish/dolphin or a bird, as depicted respectively on the lentoids VI.324 and II.3.170, attributed to Knossos. The latter could be compared with the amygdaloid VI.318 (also attributed to Knossos) on which a man in banded robes carries a bird in his hand. These birds may be gifts to the deity that were carried in procession but not slaughtered (Evans, 1935: 405; Marinatos, 1993: 132-133). Goodison's (1989: 92) suggestion that certain ceremonies included the ritual release of birds is attractive but cannot be confirmed.

This is the only motif-group discussed in this thesis that can be clearly correlated with the epigraphic and archaeological records. Regarding the former, the analyses of the Linear B tablets from Pylos and Knossos and the nodules from Thebes, undertaken by scholars including Piteros et al. (1990), Killen (1994; 1998), and Palaima (1992; 2004), have established that the Linear B records refer to sacrificial feasts and animals that were to be ritually slaughtered. Turning to the archaeological evidence, the recent publication and analyses of faunal remains from the palace at Pylos (Isaakidou et al., 2002; Stocker & Davis, 2004) and Ayios Konstantinos (Hamilakis & Konsolaki, 2004) have provided unambiguous evidence for the practice of animal sacrifice. A brief summary of the information provided by these sources is presented in **6.1.2**.

The theme of animal sacrifice as represented in glyptic has been studied by Marinatos (1986), who largely focuses upon depictions of animals with floating symbols such as figure-of-eight shields. Marinatos concentrates on the Minoan evidence, although she also makes substantial use of later Cretan and mainland evidence, without differentiating between the two. Long's (1974: 61-74) analysis of the scene upon the back of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus includes an overview of the motif of animals upon a table. A large proportion of this sub-group, however, consists of sealings from Knossos, which only received clear publication, accompanied by accurate drawings, in *CMS* II.8, published in 2002. These scenes have therefore not been widely studied. The most thorough analysis of the motif of women carrying animals is still that of Sakellarakis (1972). More recently, this motif has been very briefly discussed by Pini (2010: 334-336), as part of his wider examination of themes associated with soft stone lentoids in LM I.

The wide range of information available regarding the ritualised slaughter of

animals necessitates the clear delineation of the scope of this chapter. It is important to emphasise that my focus is upon the glyptic evidence, which means that aspects that are not depicted in glyptic are not appraised. I therefore do not discuss the interrelations between animal sacrifice and funerary cults, or the connections with feasting. The former has recently been appraised by Gallou (2005: 21-24, 82-125).³³ The institution of feasting has been stressed in the scholarly literature as an important political tool for social cohesion (Shelmerdine, 1999: 21; Palaima, 2004: 218-222) and is the subject of a recent volume.³⁴ These complex issues lie far beyond the scope of the current study, however.

The first aim of Chapter 6 is to clarify the nature of the relationship between the glyptic motifs and reality. The correlations between the iconographic, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence indicate that the representations are grounded in reality. I therefore assess the extent to which they can be used to reconstruct information regarding the details of the rituals, specifically the narrative of sacrifice, the role of men and women, and the species of animals that were sacrificed. The latter necessitates the analysis of glyptic evidence beyond the two core motifs.

The second aim is to account for the diachronic changes that occurred in the representation of animal sacrifice from Neopalatial Crete to later periods. The changes are manifested in, for example, the representation of different species and in the utilisation of different materials to render the motifs.

1.2.6 Conclusion (Chapter 7)

The preceding chapters provide the basis for the analysis of the mainland and

³³ Long (1974: 61-74) also discusses animal sacrifice in a funerary context.

³⁴ *The Mycenaean Feast*, *Hesperia* 73 (2) (2004).

post-LM IB Cretan evidence for all eleven motifs that is undertaken in the Conclusion. This evidence is compared and contrasted in four different categories. These are the motifs' geographical distribution; the materials with which they are associated;³⁵ the intensity of sphragistic use; and the non-sphragistic contexts in which they have been found. The latter class can be utilised to form conclusions regarding the artefacts' owners and non-sphragistic uses.

In the second part of the Conclusion I outline the extent to which the eleven motifs can be related to religion. This involves an appraisal of the criteria introduced below. I also summarise the extent of the connections between the rituals depicted in glyptic iconography and reality and attempt to ascertain whether changes in religious iconography reflect changes in real religious practices. Finally, the Conclusion highlights and accounts for the key changes that took place in these motifs' iconography in LM/LH II-III, emphasising the contribution of the mainland.

1.3 Seals, Rings, and Sealings: An Introduction to their Forms and Sources

1.3.1 Shapes and Materials of Seals and Rings

In this thesis, the majority of scenes appear upon seals of the lentoid shape, which was the most common form for seals in the LBA Aegean. Less frequently encountered are amygdaloids, cushions, three-sided prisms, and cylinders. The seals were engraved in relief and most that have been discovered depict decorative scenes such as animal studies; scenes involving humans are in the minority. Almost all were drilled through so that they could be threaded on a string. The predominant orientation of the drill-hole is vertical to the motif. Most seals were probably worn on strings

³⁵ I do not compare and contrast the seal shapes as the majority of seals in all the motif-groups are lentoids.

around the wrist or neck (Younger, 1988: 146; Weingarten, 2010: 317). This is confirmed by the few examples of figures wearing lentoids on bracelets in wall-paintings³⁶ and by the potential discovery of seals near the wrists of skeletons in burial contexts.³⁷

Figured scenes first widely appeared in the Neopalatial Period, when both hard and soft stone seals were produced, with the latter occurring more frequently. In LM II-III A hard stones gained in popularity, while on the mainland in LH II-III A they were used almost exclusively (Pini, 2010: 325). Hard stone seals had ceased to be used by the end of LH III A2, which provides artefacts of this class with a *terminus post quem non* for the date of their manufacture (Pini, 2010: 325; Crowley, 2013: 23). Similarly, the mainland workshops did not integrate the use of soft stones, in addition to glass, until LH III A2, which can potentially be used to demonstrate the longevity of a motif that is attested in these media (Pini, 2010: 325; Crowley, 2013: 23).

The specific stones from which the seals bearing the examples of my five motif-groups are made are those widely attested in the LBA Aegean. Many of these were available in the Aegean, including varieties of quartz such as rock crystal, and members of the chalcedony family like agate, carnelian, and jasper (Stamatatou, 2004: 7). Pini (1984: xxv-xxvi) reasons that, as agate was frequently used for seals on the mainland in LH II-III A, agate seals discovered on Crete should be regarded either as mainland imports or as being heavily influenced by the mainland. This contention is assessed in **2.3.1**, as is Pini's (1984: xxviii-xxix) suggestion that Cretan lentoids with diameters

³⁶ Examples include the Cupbearer Fresco from the palace at Knossos and the seal I.223 from Vapheio, both of which depict male figures wearing lentoids upon their wrists (Cameron, 1975: 68; Rehak, 1994: 76, 78).

³⁷ Persson (1931: 16) reports that the lentoid I.184 was found near the left wrist of the woman from pit 1 in the Dendra Midea tholos and surmises that it was worn upon the wrist. Additionally, Tsountas (1889: 148) hypothesises that the seals discovered in the cist of the Vapheio tholos were originally placed near the wrists of an individual interred therein.

greater than 2.5cm attest to mainland influence.³⁸

Lapis lacedaemonius was mined at Krokeai in southern Laconia but was also imported from Cyprus in the LBA (Pini, 1981: 144-145). It was first used for seals in the end of the Neopalatial Period and the remaining evidence suggests that it was rarely employed on the mainland (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 123, 236).³⁹

Haematite was imported from the Near East (Aruz, 2008: 93), where it was the most popular material for cylinders in the first half of the second millennium (Collon, 1987: 102). It was more commonly used on Crete than the mainland (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 236). Amethyst was likewise imported from the Near East (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 236), whereas some varieties of carnelian were probably imported from Egypt (Yule, 1987: 173). These materials were imported from the first half of the second millennium onwards (Aruz, 2008: 93).⁴⁰

The main soft stones utilised in the LBA Aegean were steatite and serpentine, both of which were available locally (Stamatatou, 2004: 35). Some stones of medium hardness (4 on the Mohs scale) also occur, such as fluorite, which was widely available at Armeni on Crete (Tamvaki, 1981: 209).

The Conclusion provides information regarding the most popular materials used for seals carrying the eleven motifs and assesses the extent to which they correlate with the trends noted above. It is not always possible to identify the particular stones, so at points only the hardness of the stone is provided. Moreover, sealings often only yield

³⁸ The size of the lentoids discussed in this thesis generally range from approximately 1.5cm in diameter to 2.5cm.

³⁹ Warren (1992: 285-296) outlines the use of lapis lacedaemonius in the Aegean from the Neopalatial Period on Crete to the Byzantine and Medieval periods.

⁴⁰ Lapis lazuli was imported from Afghanistan; Aruz (2008: 95-96) outlines the potential routes through which it arrived in the Aegean. No seals of this material are associated with the eleven motifs discussed here.

information regarding the shape of the impressing artefact.⁴¹

The other key carriers of glyptic iconography utilised in this thesis are rings; they were individually engraved and were usually made of gold or, less commonly, bronze. Metal rings were manufactured from MM II to LM IIIA on Crete and until LH IIIA2/B1 on the mainland (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 235). Far fewer metal rings are known than seals as they are less durable, as well as being recyclable and more attractive to the illicit arts market. However, a far higher proportion of the rings, compared to the seals, carry figured scenes.

There are no clear representations of people wearing rings but it is reasonable to assume that they were worn on the fingers, despite the fact that the average diameter of the ring-hoops of LBA Aegean rings was only 1.51cm (Müller, 2005: 171-172). As Müller (2005: 171-173) rightfully points out, the contemporary population probably had slimmer fingers than modern hands; he additionally suggests that rings were worn between the first and second joints of the finger, which would allow the hoops to be smaller. Wearing a seal or ring would have allowed it to be readily available when required to make an impression in clay but they may have had non-sphragistic uses, *in addition* to their sphragistic functions, which are outlined below.

1.3.2 The Sources of Seals and Rings

The majority of the provenanced seals and rings discussed in this thesis derive

⁴¹ See 1.3.3 below. This thesis analyses only a very small proportion of the known output (and a miniscule proportion of the total output), which means that it will not be possible to aid in pinpointing the possible centres of production. On the mainland, there was certainly a jewellery workshop in the ‘Kadmeia’ at Thebes (Symeonoglou, 1973: 5, 10, 18-21) and there was a possible workshop at Mycenae near the House of the Columns (Tsountas, 1897: 121). On Crete, seals were produced in the Lapidary’s Workshop in the palace at Knossos in LM IIIA at the latest (Younger, 1979: 259-267). Stamatatou (2004: 45-46) rightly points out that much of the work of shaping and engraving a seal (or ring) probably took place outside as good light was required, which would leave very little detectable trace in the archaeological record.

from burial contexts.⁴² The sources of the artefacts discussed in this thesis largely correlate with the geographical areas that have been the focus of archaeological exploration. The majority of my evidence, therefore, derives from sites in the Argolid including Mycenae, Prosymna, Tiryns, and Asine. The tombs near Pylos in Messenia have also yielded several seals and rings relevant to this thesis. A further important source is the LH IIA Vapheio tholos in Laconia, which provides the earliest securely datable contexts from the mainland used in this thesis.⁴³ Other sites are more sparsely represented, generally due to the lack of identified cemeteries of Mycenaean date. Only a very small number of seals discussed in this thesis derive from habitation contexts.

On Crete, the earliest post-LM IB contexts referred to in this thesis date to LM II-III A (the Knossos ‘warrior graves’). Several seals and rings were also excavated in the cemeteries at Armeni, with isolated artefacts being discovered at Kalyvia and Milatos. It is important to emphasise that on Crete in this period and on the mainland in LH I-III A1, seals and rings have only been discovered in rich graves (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 214-215). Moreover, all the artefacts discussed in this thesis that derive from mainland tombs are either hard stone seals or gold rings. These factors give the impression that seal ownership was restricted to the elite in these periods, although of course unprovenanced soft stone seals could have belonged to the lower strata of the population (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 214-215).⁴⁴

⁴² In this thesis, the phrases ‘excavated at’ or ‘discovered at’ in relation to an artefact’s origin indicates that it has a certain provenance. Artefacts with uncertain or debatable provenances are referred to as being ‘attributed to’ or ‘allegedly from’ a site or area as this may not be reliable.

⁴³ No seals or rings that can be argued to possess religious significance were discovered in the Shaft Graves at Mycenae. Seals and rings were discovered in Grave III (I.9-I.14) and Grave IV (I.15 and I.16). In Grave Circle B, seals derive from Grave Γ (I.5), Grave M (I.6), Grave O (I.7), and Grave P (I.8). The low number of seals and rings excavated in the Grave Circles has been commented on by Nilsson (1950: 20), Niemeier (1997: 310-311), and Rehak & Younger (2000: 256-257).

⁴⁴ Regarding the value of hard stone seals it is important to emphasise the amount of time it would have taken to produce such a seal, having acquired the material. Stamatatou (2004: 44-45) suggests that a LBA

The problems encountered in dating artefacts from burial contexts have been summarised by Niemeier (1981); they include the long periods of use associated with many tombs,⁴⁵ which often involved the disturbance of earlier remains,⁴⁶ and the fact that seals were often deposited many generations after they were first manufactured. Therefore, all contexts associated with seals and rings are strictly *terminus post quem non*.

Very few seals or rings discussed in this thesis can be securely associated with particular skeletal remains. This is due to, firstly, the high proportion of unprovenanced artefacts, and, secondly, the lack of published and detailed excavation reports for many tombs, in addition to the disturbance of the remains in tombs that were re-used.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, in **5.4** and **6.5** I provide examples of instances in which it is possible to directly associate seals or rings with skeletal remains and/or specific burial assemblages. In certain cases one can identify the gender of the artefacts' owners, which permits the assessment of whether particular media or motifs were associated with women.⁴⁸ Moreover, in **6.5** I outline some of the motifs discussed in this thesis that appear upon artefacts that derive from burials associated with individuals of exceptionally high status, such as the Vapheio cist. In my integration of information derived from burial contexts within the process of iconographic analysis I follow the precedent set by Laffineur (1992; 2000) and German (2005).

engraver undertaking every stage of the process himself would only have been able to produce three to five hard stone seals a year.

⁴⁵ Most of the tombs at Mycenae were in use from LH II to IIIA, while Tomb 7 at Aidonia was used from LH II to IIIB.

⁴⁶ Tomb 515 at Mycenae provides a clear instance of the disturbance of earlier remains, as the funerary assemblage that had originally been placed in the burial chamber in LH II was later removed to the dromos (Wace, 1932: 53).

⁴⁷ The difficulties inherent in attempting to link seals or rings with particular burials are concisely summarised by Laffineur (1992: 105).

⁴⁸ Laffineur (2000: 167) suggests that certain cult scenes depicting women were owned by women. The extent to which this may have been the case is appraised in **7.2.2**.

Of the seals and rings analysed in this thesis, 39% are unprovenanced. An additional 12% were excavated on Crete but the sites of provenance are unknown. For these reasons, I use wide date ranges when attempting to establish a possible date of manufacture for an artefact, as I stated above.

Related to the lack of provenances is the issue of forgeries. The ‘Ring of Minos’ (AM 1938.1110) and ‘Ring of Nestor’ (VI.277) have both been denounced as fakes by Nilsson (1950: 42-49) and Biesantz (19547: 115-119), among others.⁴⁹ The latter ring can now safely be regarded as a forgery on the basis of research carried out by Marinatos & Jackson (2011). The Ring of Minos has recently resurfaced, having been lost for decades, and Crowley (2013: 7 n.5) states that it has been widely (but not universally) accepted as a piece of Minoan work. It is not included here, but it is important to emphasise that it would not be organised into any of my sub-groups as its iconography relates to the epiphany-conjuring rituals, which are excluded for reasons stated below.

1.3.3 Sphragistic Uses of Seals and Rings: Sealings and their Sources

One of the key functions of the seals and rings was to make impressions in clay in administrative contexts.⁵⁰ There appears to be no connection between the motifs that appeared upon the seal or ring and their sphragistic use. Similarly, no sealings bearing the motifs discussed in this thesis can be conclusively connected with religious activity. It is for this reason that I will not be embarking upon a detailed study of sphragistic practices, which is in any case precluded by my very small data sample. Moreover, I

⁴⁹ See Niemeier (1989: 180-181) for a brief outline of the iconographic peculiarities of the Ring of Minos. Platon (1984: 65-69) and Warren (1990: 197), on the other hand, argue for its authenticity. The Ring of Nestor is regarded as genuine by Pini (1998: 1-13).

⁵⁰ This sphragistic use counts against the theory of Boardman (1970: 47-48) and Niemeier (1989: 167, 169) that all metal rings were intended to be viewed in original rather than in impression.

will not outline in detail the different administrative contexts in which the relevant sealings have been found, nor will I discuss their inscriptions. I am primarily concerned with the extent to which the motifs were used sphragistically. The intensity of a motif's sphragistic use can be measured in three different ways: in the number of seal-types attested, in the number of sealings attested, and in its geographical distribution.

The sealings often yield information regarding the artefact that impressed them. A circular impression was most likely made by a lentoid (although prisms can perhaps not be excluded), whereas an oval impression was probably made by a ring (Yule, 1977: 64). The majority of these rings were undoubtedly made of metal, as most extant rings with oval bezels were made of that material, but some could have been made by stone rings such as I.89 (discussed in **2.2.2**) (Yule, 1977: 64). Sometimes it is possible to discern two small circles along the vertical axis of oval iconographic fields that are not part of the design. The discovery of extant rings bearing this feature has demonstrated that these circles were made by rivets that were used to attach a bronze bezel to the hoop (Yule, 1977: 68).⁵¹ Turning to seals, it is sometimes possible to draw tentative estimations of the hardness of the stone that impressed the sealing, based on the techniques used in the rendering of the scene (Yule, 1977: 67-68). These are approximations only and so must be used with caution, especially in the case of fragmentary sealings. I draw my information regarding the probable material of the impressing seal from the up-to-date online *CMS* catalogue.

The sealing deposits most frequently referred to in this thesis are those from Ayia Triadha, Zakros, and Khania,⁵² which all date to LM IB, although not all sealings from the latter site derive from closed contexts. The sealings, like all others, were not

⁵¹ Sealings impressed by bronze rings are discussed in **4.2.4**.

⁵² Published in *CMS* II.6 (1999), II.7 (1998), and VS.1A (1992) respectively.

intentionally fired; rather, they were baked hard in the fires that destroyed the palaces and villas. They therefore provide a vital anchor in time, indicating when the impressing seal or ring was being used, if not when it was manufactured.

The same is true for the sealings of the mainland, where the key sphragistic evidence derives from the main Mycenaean administrative centres: the palaces at Pylos⁵³ and Thebes and the workshops at Mycenae.⁵⁴ All the sealings date to the destruction of the rooms housing the sealings in LH IIIB1-2.

The most common sealing shapes are three-sided nodules, which were formed around a piece of string or cord. They were usually impressed with a seal or ring on one side and then inscribed in Linear B on another. The text probably served to label the items to which the nodules were attached by the string, the seal impression perhaps serving to identify the person who owned or who had sent the item(s) (Bennett, 1958: 103). Many of the mainland sealings discussed in this thesis were linked with the transportation of vessels and/or wine, food, and other items, indicated by their find-spots and the text sometimes inscribed upon them.⁵⁵ The evidence clearly demonstrates that many different seals and rings, bearing a wide variety of motifs, could be used in the same area.⁵⁶

The fact that sealings have been discovered in workshops, as at Mycenae, indicates that people who worked outside the palaces (but not necessarily outside of palatial control), such as artisans and traders, also owned and used seals and rings. The Linear B records confirm that individuals of differing statuses and occupations were

⁵³ First fully published in *CMS I* (1964) but re-appraised by Müller et al. (1997) with new illustrations and transcriptions of the Linear B signs inscribed upon the sealings.

⁵⁴ First published by Bennett (1958), and more recently analysed by Müller et al. (1998), again with improved illustrations.

⁵⁵ The single nodule V.594, for example, depicting a male figure flanked by animals, bears the Linear B ideogram *190, which probably designates a type of foodstuff (Müller et al., 1998: 14, 20-21).

⁵⁶ Eighteen sealings were found in Room 98 of the palace at Pylos, which between them bear sixteen different seal-types.

active in the administrative systems and so would have required seals or rings.⁵⁷ These include priestesses, who are recorded as holding land leases (Ventris & Chadwick, 1973: 253, 445).⁵⁸ One should not assume, therefore, that the people who used the seals and rings were male and that they held secular roles. A further assumption to be avoided is that *all* seals and rings were used sphragistically in the LBA Aegean (Younger, 1988: xvi; Pini, 1992a: 115-116).

Special mention must be made of the sealings from Knossos. The sealings discussed in this thesis derive from the palace itself in addition to the nearby Little Palace, which was probably built in LM IA (Driessen & Macdonald, 1997: 157-158). These present a special challenge, firstly, because information regarding the find-spots of several sealings either has been lost or was recorded incompletely or inaccurately at the time of the excavation.⁵⁹ Secondly, of those that do have a secure provenance, an even smaller number derives from narrowly dateable contexts. The ongoing deliberations regarding the date of the final destruction(s) of the palace at Knossos add further complexity to the debate;⁶⁰ I avoid entering this discussion as only a very small proportion of the seal-types studied in this thesis derives from Knossos.

Through my analysis of the iconography of the impressions carried by these sealings, I will be able to critically assess the contention of Pini (1990: 115) that almost all of the LH IIIB sealings were impressed by heirloom seals and rings. In **7.2.1** I additionally undertake a brief comparison between the motifs used sphragistically at

⁵⁷ Weingarten (1988: 11-14) stresses the non-elite sealing pattern of the palace of Knossos after LM IB, in which many different seals and rings are attested on only a few sealings each.

⁵⁸ Tablet Ep704 refers to priestess *Eritha* as having land holdings (Ventris & Chadwick, 1973: 256-262).

⁵⁹ Two of the fourteen seal-types from Knossos discussed in this thesis have unknown provenances. The problems involved in linking the Knossos sealings with their original contexts are outlined by Gill (2002: 101-109).

⁶⁰ That there was a series of destructions at the palace in the LBA is demonstrated by the fact that the Linear B tablets in the Room of the Chariot Tablets were burned earlier than the date of the final destruction, probably in LM II (Weingarten, 1988: 11; Driessen, 2000).

Knossos and those that appear in the later mainland sealing deposits, assessing if any are absent from the former site. Moreover, I will propose an explanation of why motifs of religious significance are attested in sphragistic contexts.

1.3.4 Non-Sphragistic Uses

I noted above that hard stone seals and gold rings from the mainland in LH I-III A can be assumed to have belonged to the elite, at least in the early phases of their use. Seals manufactured from stones such as amethyst provide indications of even higher status, manifested in the ability to acquire imported materials. This raises the possibility that hard stone seals and gold rings could serve as markers of status on the basis of their material alone and that the motifs they bore were not significant (Boardman, 1970: 56). Similarly, for many seals, especially those made of veined or mottled stones, the motif would not have been discernible; Younger (1977: 157) suggests that many seals were worn because the stones from which they were carved were attractive.

An objective of this thesis is therefore to ascertain the significance of the motif, that is, to establish the extent to which the motif could alter or enhance the use or status of the artefact upon which it was engraved. Utilising patterns in burial contexts, appearances in or near palatial centres, and associations with high status materials, I will identify the motifs that are exclusively connected with the elite. I will then attempt to establish which features made them particularly suitable as markers of status, by ascertaining whether the motifs correlate with the known methods of elite display.⁶¹

⁶¹ Laffineur (1990; 1992; 2000) argues that the seal or ring's iconography contributes to its value as a marker of status. Based on an examination of the find contexts, he hypothesises that scenes of combat and chariots, in addition to certain antithetic animal groups, were used as emblems of high status (Laffineur,

High status can be demonstrated through the acquisition of exotica, through involvement in, and control over, religious rituals, and through close links with palatial authority (Marinatos, 1993: 74-75; Wright, 1995: 65-75). Keeping these criteria in mind, I will ascertain the extent to which the motif fulfils the requirements for markers of elite status, beyond the material of the artefact upon which it was engraved.⁶²

Other motifs, especially those of the male and female figures flanked by animals, have been regarded as possessing apotropaic properties. This possibility is evaluated in **2.4**, by analysing the meanings of the motifs themselves and by utilising parallels with the Near East.

The final potential non-sphragistic use of seals and rings that is discussed in this thesis is as votive offerings. In **6.5** I outline which of my selected motifs are attested in sanctuary contexts and comment upon the significance of the motif in relation to this use.

1.4 Selecting and Interpreting the Material

1.4.1 Identifying Minoan Precursors

The first task is to justify the selection of LM IB as my dividing line for the Cretan evidence. The LM IB period ended with destructions occurring across Crete and the subsequent abandonment of the palaces and villas at Mallia, Zakros, Ayia Triadha, and elsewhere. Only Knossos continued to be important in LM II-III A. The reasons

1990: 154-160; 1992: 105-112). However, he does not clearly explain how these motifs came to function as indicators of high status, as German (2005: 15) rightly points out.

⁶² The possibility that certain motifs functioned as exotica is explored in Chapter 3. The connection between high status and religious rituals is outlined in Chapters 5 and 6.

behind the LM IB collapse are obscure and do not concern us here.⁶³ The key point is that after this date Crete became increasingly ‘Mycenaeanised’ and it is conceivable that people from the mainland occupied the palace in LM II-III A, as is suggested by the presence of Linear B. As such, the end of LM IB is accepted as a turning point in Cretan history and therefore serves as a clear dividing line for comparisons. The differences in Cretan society before and after LM IB are highlighted by the clear changes that occurred in the bureaucratic system and in sphragistic practices.⁶⁴ For these reasons, I restrict my use of the term ‘Minoan’ to the Neopalatial Period and earlier.

One of the most important stages in my analysis is the separation of material that is of Neopalatial origin from that which was manufactured on post-LM IB Crete or on the LH mainland. In this, a secure provenance is paramount. The majority of my Minoan precursors derive from the LM IB sealing deposits referred to above. Others were discovered in buildings destroyed or abandoned at the end of the Neopalatial Period. Only four precursors do not derive from secure Neopalatial contexts; these are assigned to LM I on the basis of very close iconographic similarities with artefacts of that date.⁶⁵ These precursors are separated from the sub-groups proper and are not included in the final analyses of the motifs undertaken in the Conclusion. Artefacts that are potentially of LM I date but that are unprovenanced or derive from later contexts are included in the main group; the analysis of these artefacts focuses upon ascertaining their origin.

⁶³ Despite its flaws, noted by Warren (2001: 115-118), I find Driessen & Macdonald’s (1997) overall thesis of a gradual collapse that started in the mature LM IA period and that ended with the widespread destructions in LM IB convincing.

⁶⁴ The changes in the sealing systems utilised from LM IB to the final destruction of the palace at Knossos, and their differences and similarities with those of LH IIIB/C on the mainland, are delineated by Palaima (1987) and Weingarten (1988).

⁶⁵ One of these precursors stylistically dates to MM II-III A and so is the oldest artefact discussed in this thesis (see 2.2.5). The justification for assigning the other three artefacts to LM I are outlined in 3.3.6, 4.2.4, and 5.2.5.

Beyond the methods outlined above, I do not employ any other criteria to identify Minoan precursors. As Niemeier (1983: 223) points out, there are no entirely reliable criteria, iconographic or otherwise, for distinguishing between ‘Minoan’ and ‘Mycenaean’ artefacts. Nonetheless, some scholars have proposed that aniconity, in which the outline of the head is rendered but facial features are omitted, is restricted to Neopalatial glyptic, particularly metal rings (Nilsson, 1950: 362; Pini, 1983: 39-45; 2002: 18; Younger, 1995: 154). This contention is critically assessed in **2.3.1**.

1.4.2 Recurring Motifs

In order for a glyptic scene to be defined here as recurring, thereby justifying its designation as a *motif*, it must be attested at more than one site and appear at least five times in the post-LM IB/LH evidence. Due to the need for repeated attestations in evidence of this class, I have excluded from this thesis the scenes associated with epiphany-conjuring rituals, such as tree-grasping and boulder-touching.⁶⁶ These representations are primarily a phenomenon of Neopalatial Crete and are rarely attested in LM/LH II-III A iconography, as Niemeier (1990: 169-170) notes. Nonetheless, in **4.1.2** I provide an outline of the depiction of these rituals in relation to the enacted epiphany ritual, which may be attested in the LM/LH II-III A evidence.⁶⁷ There are a large number of recurring motifs in LM/LH II-III A iconography; therefore, it was necessary to employ criteria in order to select the material and establish which scenes are more securely associated with religion.

⁶⁶ The latter is often referred to as a ‘baetyl’, but I use the more neutral term throughout this thesis.

⁶⁷ A possible scene of the tree-grasping ritual is included as an example of the motif of single figures with architecture (**5.3.4**).

1.4.3 Criteria for the Selection of Recurring Motifs

There are four ways in which a motif can be defined as being ‘religious’ that are relevant to this study:

- It depicts a being that can be identified as a deity.
- It depicts the interaction between deities and mortals.
- It depicts or alludes to a ritual that was performed in order to propitiate or achieve contact with a divine being.
- It does not depict deities or religious rituals but utilises religious iconography.⁶⁸

In order to select material potentially belonging to these classes, I employed four principal criteria. The most significant of these was the presence of anthropomorphic figures, specifically those who exhibit indications of divinity, which are outlined below. Horns of consecration were a second important criterion; their presence securely links a scene with cult. The presence of architecture, including altars and pillars, was additionally sufficient to warrant inclusion, especially as the majority of the architectural forms discussed in this thesis are attested in juxtaposition with horns of consecration. Daemons, which are described in more detail below, are the final principal criterion of selection. As with the anthropomorphic figures, the activities of the daemons must be taken into account: I exclude scenes of single daemons standing or walking, with no additional elements depicted.⁶⁹ The presence of any of these four criteria in just one attestation of a motif is sufficient to warrant the motif’s inclusion in

⁶⁸ This last category is relevant to the motifs discussed in Chapter 3.

⁶⁹ I have excluded scenes relating to the bull-games (bull-leaping and bull-grappling) due to the absence of the criteria proposed above, that is, humans that could be identified as deities, horns of consecration, architecture, and daemons. Crucially, thorough accounts and interpretations of representations of this class have already been put forward, most notably by Younger (1976) and, more recently, by German (2005: 33-49, with bibliography). Indeed, Nilsson (1950: 374) argues that there is no iconographic or archaeological evidence to suggest that bull-games were ‘more than a very popular secular sport’.

this thesis.⁷⁰

These four elements were the most significant factors employed in selecting my material; the following sections outline them in more detail. These sections also introduce some additional criteria that have been proposed by scholars to identify religious scenes that were not employed in the initial selection process, such as fantastic creatures other than daemons and certain plants. These elements are critically discussed within the thesis in order to ascertain their usefulness as indicators of a potential connection with cult.⁷¹

1.4.3.1 Anthropomorphic Figures

The criteria that can assist in distinguishing between deities and mortals are outlined below; I introduce here the glyptic conventions employed in the depiction of the human form and some of the means by which one can ascertain the figures' gender. Women can be identified by the presence of breasts, which are usually depicted frontally, unless the engraver wished to convey movement, in which case they are rendered in profile. They are often bare; sometimes a bodice or jacket is indicated. When they can be discerned, the thighs of women are usually large. Men, in contrast, usually have narrow waists and triangular chests.

Clothing is also a useful indicator of gender. Most women wear flounced skirts

⁷⁰ The inclusion of one of the final motifs discussed in this thesis, that of women carrying animals, is justified, firstly, by some scholars' interpretation of the women as goddesses (see 6.3.1), and, secondly, by the existence of a very similar motif depicting daemons carrying animals.

⁷¹ The following sections are not intended to represent an exhaustive list of potential elements connected with religion; I only outline the criteria relevant to scenes discussed in this thesis. Renfrew (1985: 14-24) provides an overview of the means by which cult rituals can be recognised from the archaeological remains, in addition to criteria that can be employed to identify deities. Krattenmaker (1995a: 118-127) focuses on glyptic and delineates the aspects that can connect a scene with cult.

that generally reach below the knee and have varied levels of decoration.⁷² The favoured outfit of men is a short kilt or girdle, usually combined with a bare, frontal chest. Other men wear long, diagonally banded robes, but they only appear once in scenes discussed in this thesis.⁷³ Other features are associated with both genders, such as headgear, which appears rarely in scenes analysed in this thesis, and jewellery including bracelets, anklets, and necklaces or neck-rings.⁷⁴ Some figures wear a long, undecorated robe that is perhaps associated with both genders; in these cases it is not possible to identify the figures' gender beyond doubt.⁷⁵

1.4.3.2 Architectural Elements

The second significant indicator employed in this thesis in order to select motifs possessing religious significance is the horns of consecration; their appearance within a scene, or upon architecture, is a strong indication of a connection with religion (Gesell, 1985: 35; Krattenmaker, 1995a: 121). Evans (1901: 137) surmised that the horns are a schematic representation of bulls' horns, which has been generally accepted in the scholarly literature.⁷⁶ The roles of the horns of consecration in the LBA Aegean are summarised in **7.3.1.1**. They sometimes appear atop incurved altars, the presence of which also warrants inclusion in this thesis; they are discussed in more detail in **3.4**.

⁷² German (2005: 24-25) outlines the different types of clothing depicted in iconography in the LBA Aegean and accounts for the variations that exist.

⁷³ On a Minoan precursor discussed in **3.3.6**. Men in diagonally banded robes are almost exclusively associated with Neopalatial Crete, appearing at only two sites on the mainland: in the tholoi at Vapheio (I.223 and I.225) and Routsis (VS.1A.345). These artefacts are analysed by Rehak (1994).

⁷⁴ The different types of jewellery and their significance is analysed by Younger (1992).

⁷⁵ This robe appears in scenes discussed in **2.3.3**, **4.3.1**, and **4.3.3**. The garment worn by the figure on I.80 (**6.2.4**) may be a tunic rather than a long dress.

⁷⁶ Watrous (1998: 23-24), on the other hand, argues that this symbol was based upon the Middle Egyptian hieroglyph *ḏw*, meaning 'horizon'. This can be excluded as the similarity in form between the horns and hieroglyph is simply coincidental.

Similarly, horns of consecration are associated with pillars; the connection between pillars and cult is outlined in **3.2.1**.

1.4.3.3 Fantastic Creatures

The fantastic creature that is the most useful indicator that a scene possesses a religious nature, and so the most significant in selecting the material, is the daemon, which is also known as the ‘Minoan genius’. It is a hybrid creature that has a slim body and the head of a lion, hippo, or donkey. Gill (1964) and Weingarten (1991) have conclusively demonstrated that it developed from the iconography of the Egyptian goddess Taweret. This creature was transformed in MM II-III A: it acquired a narrow waist and a scaly back and from this point onwards the ewer was its main attribute (Gill, 1964: 6-7; Weingarten, 1991: 5-7). By the Neopalatial Period, the daemon had become fully Aegeanised (Crowley, 1989a: 209).

Rehak (1995b: 215-216) assigns the daemon a sacerdotal role, noting that it often functions as would a human priest or worshipper. The daemon appears multiple times in this thesis: flanking central standing figures (**2.2.1**, **2.3.1**) or pillars or plants (**3.2.2**, **3.3.1**), with seated women (**4.3.1**, **4.3.3**), and carrying or leading animals (**6.2.3**, **6.3.4**, **6.4**). The analyses of the daemon in these different roles will ascertain the extent to which one is justified in designating it a religious marker.

Turning to other fantastic creatures, griffins are of Syrian origin and are attested in the LM IB sealing deposits at Zakros and Ayia Triadha (Crowley, 1989a: 46-48; Aruz, 2008: 100, 107-108).⁷⁷ They appear numerous times in this thesis, for example flanking male and female figures (**2.2.1**, **2.3.1**) or attending seated figures (**4.3.1**). In

⁷⁷ Griffins are depicted singly on the LM IB seal-types II.7.87, II.7.90, II.7.91, II.7.92, and II.7.93 from Zakros, and in an antithetic arrangement on II.6.102 from Ayia Triadha, discussed in **3.3.6**.

these scenes they are usually represented with displayed wings, that is, wings that are raised and clearly visible. However, despite being a fantastic creature, and as such removed from the terrestrial world, griffins more frequently appear in a range of purely secular scenes, usually alone as decorative elements.⁷⁸ They are sometimes depicted as hunters,⁷⁹ but they are also represented as pets.⁸⁰ The presence of griffins alone, therefore, is not sufficient to imbue a scene with religious significance (Wedde, 1995: 500-501).

The sphinx originated in Egypt but it was altered in Anatolia before arriving in the Aegean in the sixteenth century (Aruz, 2008: 106-107).⁸¹ Unlike daemons and griffins, sphinxes only occur a dozen times in glyptic, usually alone, and they do not appear to have been linked with cult.⁸² They are far more widely attested in funerary iconography, particularly upon larnakes from Tanagra; their role in such iconography has been summarised by Gallou (2005: 49-51). Sphinxes appear only once in this thesis, flanking a tree; this scene is discussed in **3.3.5**.

The lion is not a fantastic creature but Wedde (1995: 500-501) rightly points out that it operates in both the divine and mortal spheres, appearing in similar contexts to griffins, as is most clearly demonstrated by a scene in which a male figure is flanked by a griffin on one side and a lion on the other.⁸³ Lions flank men and women (**2.2.2**,

⁷⁸ Single griffins appear on the cushions I.293 from Pylos, I.269 and I.271 from Routsis, and on the amygdaloid I.85 from Mycenae.

⁷⁹ Griffins are represented as hunters on V.216 from Brauron, II.3.25 from Knossos, and XI.308, which is unprovenanced.

⁸⁰ On I.309 from Pylos a griffin appears to sit obediently at the feet of several standing men like a pet, as Crowley (1989a: 50) observes.

⁸¹ Some of the earliest attestations of sphinxes in the Aegean appear upon fresco fragments from the palace at Knossos (Cameron, 1975: 156; Crowley, 1989a: 41)

⁸² Sphinxes appear on I.129 from Mycenae, II.3.118 from Ayia Triadha, II.2.29, II.3.39, and II.8.194 from Knossos, VS.3.353 from Mochlos, VS.3.359 from Tripitos in East Crete, V.690 from Akrotiri on Thera, and the unprovenanced seals VS.1B.102, VI.128, and XII.242.

⁸³ This scene occurs upon II.3.167, discussed in **2.2.1**. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between lions and dogs. Younger (1988: xvii-xviii) points out that lions rarely wear collars, in contrast to dogs, and that the latter have more pointed ears than lions.

2.3.1), pillars (**3.2.4**), and altars (**3.4.2**), and they appear with seated women (**4.3**). Like griffins, lions in glyptic appear in secular contexts, frequently being depicted alone⁸⁴ or as hunters,⁸⁵ but, unlike griffins, they are also represented as the quarry of human hunters.⁸⁶ That lions did exist on the Greek mainland has been proved by the discovery of lion bones at Tiryns in LH I-IIIC contexts (Driesch & Boessneck, 1990: 110-111).⁸⁷ The presence of lions is therefore insufficient to link a scene with cult.

A final creature that can be linked with cult is the monkey. In the few instances in which these creatures appear in glyptic they perform actions associated with humans, for example attending seated women (**4.3.2**). This removes them from the terrestrial sphere and is sufficient to connect a scene with cult (Krattenmaker, 1995a: 122).

1.4.3.4 Plants

When describing flora (as well as fauna) I utilise general, neutral terms ('plant', 'tree'); more accurate identification is hindered due to the very small iconographic field in glyptic, which allows for only limited detail. Moreover, the ancient engraver may not have been attempting to present a literal and detailed representation of vegetation. Nonetheless, it is possible to identify palms, papyrus plants, and lilies. Marinatos (1989: 133-134), Niemeier (1989: 183-184), and Hiller (2011: 104-108) argue that the former, which are usually stylised, are linked with the deity's epiphany and so can function as cult markers. This is critically assessed in **3.3.3**, in which the different glyptic contexts in which palms appear are outlined.

⁸⁴ Single lions appear on II.4.17 from Kalyvia and II.4.206 from Mochlos.

⁸⁵ Lions are illustrated as hunters on VS.3.19 from Kritsa in East Crete, and on VI.377 and X.129, which are unprovenanced.

⁸⁶ Examples of lions as hunting victims are cited in **6.4.2**.

⁸⁷ See Thomas (2004: 189-190) for a full list of excavated lion remains in the Aegean. As Shapland (2010b: 276) emphasises, there is no evidence that lions were present on Crete in the LBA.

Naturalistic trees are frequently depicted being touched in religious rituals in Neopalatial glyptic, which are outlined in **4.1.2**. Scholars including Marinatos (1989: 137-138) and Wedde (1992: 187) suggest that trees of a similar form may serve as cult markers, indicating the place at which the deity appears.⁸⁸ However, this criterion is only applicable to scenes in which other indicators of religious nature are present, such as a floating figure. Trees are sometimes depicted in association with architecture in the scenes discussed in this thesis, as in **5.2.2** and **5.3.4**; these trees can be linked with cult on the basis of comparisons with architecture depicted being utilised in rituals in Neopalatial glyptic.

1.4.3.5 Additional Elements

An item very frequently associated with LBA Aegean religion is the double axe, which consists of a shaft and two symmetrical curved blades. The double axe has been regarded as a sacrificial implement and symbol by Nilsson (1950: 231) and Dietrich (1988: 38-39). However, it is never depicted in a clearly sacrificial context in glyptic; in Neopalatial iconography it is frequently illustrated being carried by both male and female figures.⁸⁹ Warren (1988: 20-21) and Marinatos (1993: 145) argue that the double axe was not exclusively associated with sacrifice, suggesting instead that double axes could be erected to mark the spot where religious rituals took place. More recently, an evaluation of the double axe in its wider archaeological and iconographic contexts has been undertaken by Haysom (2010), who emphasises its use as a secular tool. The

⁸⁸ This contention is discussed more thoroughly in **4.2.4** in relation to the depiction of seated women.

⁸⁹ The seal-types II.6.10, II.7.7, and VS.3.394, from Ayia Triadha, Zakros, and Akrotiri respectively, show male and female figures holding double axes, which on the latter two examples are carried alongside a garment. This evidence is complemented by II.3.8, a LM I-II lentoid from Knossos that depicts a woman carrying a garment and a double axe with reduplicated blades.

double axe rarely occurs in scenes discussed in this thesis.⁹⁰ For this reason, I will not conduct a thorough analysis of its significance, but its presence in a scene is sufficient to raise the possibility of a link with cult.

Three floating symbols are frequently regarded in scholarship as possessing a religious nature. These are the figure-of-eight shield, sacral knot, and impaled triangle, all of which occur numerous times in scenes discussed in this thesis. The former symbol is so-called due to its resemblance to the large shield shaped like a figure-of-eight that consisted of a wooden frame covered with cowhide. It appears numerous times being worn by soldiers or hunters.⁹¹ It also features in scenes of epiphany-conjuring; this role is discussed in **4.2.4**.

The sacral knot was named as such by Evans (1921: 430) and it consists of a loop of knotted fabric with fringed ends below; the body of the knot is sometimes decorated with vertical or horizontal bands or scales. The nature of the item to which this symbol refers is examined in **3.2.4**. Finally, the impaled triangle is an isosceles triangle that is ‘impaled’ with a line that emanates from the vertex angle, bisecting the triangle and continuing beyond its base. There is no consensus in scholarship as to what real item it may relate to, with suggestions including a bladed weapon (Marinatos, 1986: 62-63) and a stylised tree-standard (Rutkowski, 1973: 155). **3.4.1** presents evidence in favour of the former interpretation.

All three of these symbols most frequently occur in scenes of animals engraved

⁹⁰ The double axe forms part of the headdress of the female figures flanked by animals (**2.3.1**) and appears on the Great Goddess Ring (**4.2.3**).

⁹¹ On I.12 from Grave Circle A at Mycenae, II.3.32, which is unprovenanced, and the seal-types II.8.276, II.8.277, and II.8.278 from Knossos. The figure-of-eight shield in the LBA Aegean is discussed by Daniilidou (1998).

upon lentoids, in which they float in the field independently of the animals.⁹² All three elements have been explained by Marinatos (1986: 25, 64, 71) as designating the animals with which they appear as sacrificial victims to be offered to a deity. This interpretation has been followed by Morgan (1995: 142, 145) and Niemeier (1997: 308). The discussion of these three elements will aim to establish whether the evidence supports this contention, or whether Nilsson (1950: 410) and Krzyszkowska (2005: 208-209) are justified to argue that they are simply decorative fillers that are devoid of religious significance. The meaning of the figure-of-eight shield is assessed in **3.2.4**, as is that of the sacral knot. The impaled triangle is discussed in **3.4.1**. The true value of these elements may reside in the fact that they are restricted to LM/LH II-III glyptic; their presence in a scene is thus a useful indication of the date in which it was engraved (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 208-209, 260).

1.4.4 Criteria for Ascertaining the Divinity of a Figure

This section outlines a selection of the criteria that will be employed to assist in distinguishing deities from mortals.

1.4.4.1 Attributes

Distinguishing between deities and mortals has long been recognised as one of the principal challenges of Aegean glyptic (and wider LBA iconography) because Aegean deities do not have attributes designating them as such. The only elements that could be described as ‘attributes’ in LBA Aegean glyptic are the ‘snake frames’.⁹³

⁹² Seals depicting animals with figure-of-eight shields: I.115, I.412, V.683, V.751, VI.409, IX.124, and IX.147; with sacral knots: I.54, II.8.398, VII.125, and X.142; with impaled triangles: I.106, II.4.202, VS.1B.176b, VS.3.19, VIII.107, VIII.108, and XII.237.

⁹³ This term was first devised by Evans (1921: 721). They are hereafter referred to only as ‘frames’.

These curved, horn-like elements are sometimes associated with female figures flanked by animals, appearing above or in place of their heads. The possibility that the frames are divine attributes is assessed in **2.3.2** and **2.3.4**.

1.4.4.2 Gesture

Several scholars emphasise that a limited number of gestures occur in cult scenes, some of which can be clearly identified (Niemeier, 1989: 167).⁹⁴ A gesture associated with deities is that with upraised hands with open palms, known as the ‘epiphany gesture’ (Burkert, 1985: 23). Renfrew (1985: 23) rightly points out, however, that as well as indicating a deity’s appearance it could also be utilised to indicate a worshipper’s adoration of said deity. This class of gesture appears only once in this thesis, on the Minoan precursor II.6.5, discussed in **4.2.4**.

A second gesture that is often used in scholarship to identify deities is the ‘commanding gesture’, in which one arm is outstretched horizontally; these figures sometimes grasp a spear or other shaft (Niemeier, 1989: 170-171). This gesture is assessed in detail in **4.2.1**. Generally, however, gesture is regarded as an unreliable indication of a figure’s divinity (Wedde, 1995: 496).

1.4.4.3 The Performance of Actions of which Humans are Incapable

One criterion that is considered sufficient by many scholars to provide a positive identification of a figure as a deity is their ability to control fantastic creatures such as daemons or griffins (Coldstream, 1977: 5; Burkert, 1985: 23; Renfrew, 1985: 23-24). Nilsson (1950: 360) and Marinatos (1990: 146) also consider figures that dominate lions

⁹⁴ Articles that study gesture in particular include those by Niemeier (1986), Wedde (1999), and Morris (2001). Wedde (1999: 914) identifies twenty-four different gestures that occur in scenes of a religious nature.

as divinities. However, scenes such as I.223 from Vapheio, which depicts a standing male figure accompanied by a griffin that he restrains on a leash, have reduced the reliability of this criterion, as this figure is almost certainly a mortal, possibly a high-level administrator (Rehak, 1994: 83-84). Thomas & Wedde (2001: 9) have also doubted the connection between the ability to control fantastic or powerful creatures and divinity. The usefulness of this criterion is assessed in more detail in Chapter 2, in which I outline the different methods in which control over creatures can be manifested and the significance of the species controlled. The theme of control over animals appears in a different guise in the scenes of seated women discussed in 4.3.

A few scenes discussed in this thesis include small anthropomorphic figures that appear to float in the upper part of the iconographic field. These figures can be securely identified as either approaching deities (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1989b: 248) or as symbols representing the presence of a deity (Hägg, 1986: 46, 58).⁹⁵ These figures are almost entirely restricted to scenes associated with epiphany rituals, which are outlined in 4.1.2; the Great Goddess Ring perhaps provides the only exception (4.2.3).

1.4.4.4 *Being Seated*

For women in glyptic, being seated is often viewed in scholarship as an indication of divinity, as Niemeier (1990: 167) notes.⁹⁶ However, the veracity of this criterion is challenged by Thomas & Wedde (2001: 6), who posit that being seated alone is insufficient to identify a deity. Wedde (1992: 195-196) offers some clarifications to this criterion, arguing that seating oneself upon a cult building is a

⁹⁵ Kyriakidis (2005: 137-154) somewhat implausibly suggests that these floating figures, in addition to other floating elements, refer to constellations; he theorises, for example, that the floating figure holding a bow on VI.278, briefly discussed in 5.3.5, represents Orion.

⁹⁶ 4.1.1 provides a small selection of examples that establishes the relationship between being seated and divinity.

divine prerogative, as is the reception of offerings or certain gestures while seated. This can also be combined with control over fantastic and powerful creatures. This combination of criteria is utilised in Chapter 4 in order to test whether any seated women occur in scenarios incompatible with the divine interpretation.

1.4.4.5 Other Criteria

Some scholars have argued that aniconity, a trait that occurs in this thesis in relation to certain female figures flanked by animals, was applied only to deities. However, aniconity is now regarded as a technique or artistic style that is of limited diagnostic value in ascertaining the status of the figure to whom it was applied (Nilsson, 1950: 362; Pini, 1983: 39-50; Younger, 1995: 154).

1.4.5 Criteria for Ascertaining the Mortality of a Figure

Figures carrying potential offerings such as flowers, branches, or other elements can be regarded as mortal votaries (Tamvaki, 1989: 266). Regarding specific gestures, that of one or both hands raised towards the face or forehead is regarded as restricted to mortals, being labelled as a gesture of adoration by Niemeier (1989: 167, 169-170), Tamvaki (1989: 266) and Sourvinou-Inwood (1990: 195-196). In **7.3.3** I collect examples of gestures used by mortals encountered in this thesis in order to establish whether there are clear, recurring gestures that are exclusively used by non-divine figures. Generally, I regard the figures that appear in this thesis as mortals, unless clear indications of divinity are present.

The usefulness of these different sets of criteria is appraised in the Conclusion.

Moreover, a statement is made regarding the combinations that can produce a secure identification of a scene as possessing religious significance or that can indicate a figure's status.

1.5 Glyptic Iconography as a Source for Religious Practices

An implicit assumption frequently made in the scholarly literature is that several glyptic motifs were inspired by, or perhaps even depict, rituals that were performed in reality.⁹⁷ It is reasonable to suggest that the artists of the Aegean sought inspiration from real life. The fact that so many of these motifs recur in disparate locations, in glyptic and in other media, suggests that they had a common source, which could be the witnessing of a ritual that occurred in a shared religion. It is important to emphasise that it is unlikely that the intention of the engraver was to provide a wholly accurate representation of the ritual, as Sourvinou-Inwood (1989b: 145) notes; the rituals merely provided the initial impetus for some motifs' creation. Before attempting to utilise glyptic as a source for real religious practices, this assumption must be provided with a sound basis.

The first factor to be appraised in establishing whether a scene is connected with reality is whether it is physically achievable. Consistency in the representation is another useful feature and suggests that the scenes refer to the same ritual. However, it is insufficient to state that scenes relate to reality simply because the actions they depict are physically achievable (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1989b: 99).

This argument can be placed on a firmer basis by noting the many correlations between iconography and archaeological evidence. Firstly, many elements that appear

⁹⁷ This is relevant for the motifs discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

in iconography are attested physically in three dimensions, including horns of consecration⁹⁸ and rectangular and incurved altars, as Krattenmaker (1995a: 121) emphasises.⁹⁹ **4.1.2** contains a list of parallels between archaeology and epiphany-conjuring rituals, in order to establish that iconography can relate to real religious practices. Animal sacrifice can be linked with both the archaeological and epigraphic records, as I noted above.

Secondly, cult spaces in which the actions depicted in iconography could have been performed have been identified archaeologically.¹⁰⁰ These include palaces, which were important ritual centres, especially on Crete. Rituals that have been argued to take place in palaces include bull-leaping,¹⁰¹ dancing and processions,¹⁰² animal sacrifice and feasting,¹⁰³ among others.¹⁰⁴ The epigraphic, archaeological, and iconographic evidence suggests that in the palaces of the mainland religious rituals were performed in the megaron (Blegen & Rawson, 1966: 88-89; Wright, 1994: 57-60; Shelmerdine, 1999: 21; Maran & Stavrianopoulou, 2007: 286-292). Some of the scenes discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 contain indications of the landscape in which the actions depicted were set. **5.2.1**, **5.2.2**, and **5.3.1** outline the evidence for regarding certain classes of architecture in

⁹⁸ Gesell (1985: 62) summarises the contexts in which horns of consecration have been discovered on Crete. On the mainland, fragments of horns of consecration were found at the palace at Pylos (Blegen & Rawson, 1966: 328).

⁹⁹ Rectangular altars have been found in Room 31 of the Cult Centre at Mycenae and in Court 92 of the Northeastern Building of the palace at Pylos (Blegen & Rawson, 1966: 301-302). No functional incurved altars have yet been discovered on the mainland, as Rehak (1995a: 105) notes. Full-sized incurved altars have only been found on Crete in Neopalatial contexts (Gesell, 1985: 64); these include four from Courtyard 1 of the 'Palace' at Archanes (Y. & E. Sakellarakis, 1997: 80-83).

¹⁰⁰ These include the Cult Centre at Mycenae, referred to at numerous points throughout this thesis, and the sanctuaries at Ayios Konstantinos and Epidauros, both mentioned in **6.1.2** in relation to animal sacrifice.

¹⁰¹ Graham (1987: 73-83) suggests that bull-leaping took place in the palaces at Knossos, Phaistos, and Mallia.

¹⁰² German (2005: 28) argues that both dancing and processions were performed at Knossos, following Evans (1930: 66-80). These rituals, and the evidence for their performance in palatial settings, are considered in more detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁰³ Evidence for the practice of animal sacrifice at the palace at Pylos is provided in **6.1.2**. Works regarding feasting were cited in **1.2.5**.

¹⁰⁴ Several scholars have argued that enacted epiphany rituals took place in the Throne Room of the palace at Knossos. This is briefly discussed in **2.3.2** and **4.1.2**.

iconography as indicative of a palatial environment.

The following chapters present a detailed analysis of the five motif-groups outlined above. The emphasis is placed upon, firstly, interpreting the motifs, in addition to other iconographic elements present within the scenes, and, secondly, ascertaining their origins. The evidence provided by an appraisal of the diachronic changes that occurred in the motifs' iconography is assessed in the Conclusion in order to establish the extent of the Mycenaean contribution to the repertoire of religious motifs in LM/LH II-III. The resulting conclusion will demonstrate the value of glyptic iconography as a source for both Aegean religion and for the interrelations between Minoan Crete and the Mycenaean mainland.

CHAPTER 2. MALE AND FEMALE FIGURES FLANKED BY ANIMALS

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Outline of the Motif-Group

This chapter analyses the motifs of a single standing male or female figure symmetrically flanked by animals. There are thirty-one examples of male figures flanked by animals in glyptic, which include eleven seal-types that appear upon sealings. There is only one secure Minoan precursor. Turning to the female figures, there are twenty-one examples in this sub-group, including four seal-types that appear upon sealings. There are no secure Minoan precursors. The provenanced examples, which form approximately half of the totals for both motifs, are approximately evenly distributed between the mainland and Crete. All attestations of this motif-group should be broadly dated to LM/LH II-III A; the possible exceptions are noted below.

There are several significant differences between the iconography of the male and female figures, which suggests that the gender of the figure depicted was not incidental. The first key difference concerns the figures' interaction with the animals. Regarding male figures, in twenty out of thirty-one examples they grasp or restrain the animals. In contrast, female figures do so in only four out of twenty-one examples. The male figures are thus generally associated with the animals in a more physical manner. The second key difference is in the species of animals with which the figures are associated. Lions and griffins feature prominently as accompanying animals of the female figures, followed by birds and sea creatures. Lions are also the favourite animal of the male figures, but griffins appear very rarely and herbivores and daemons are

attested in place of birds and sea creatures. A third difference concerns the rendering of their facial features. Regarding the male figures, in each instance an attempt is made to engrave some facial features, always on a profile head. The renderings range from naturalistic to schematic and the figures' hair is usually indicated by three or four drill-holes. In contrast, the female figures' faces were frequently either schematically reduced to one or two lines or left blank.

The final important difference between the two figures is the frames that frequently appear above the heads of the female figures. They are never associated with males, with the possible exception of the Aegina Pendant, described below. The frames have been thoroughly analysed by Gill (1969: 85-102), Hägg & Lindau (1984: 67-77), and Marinatos (1984: 115-122). Nonetheless, an analysis of the frames is undertaken in **2.3.2** in an attempt to ascertain their origin and significance. I also assess the influence the presence of the frames has on the iconography of the scenes in which they appear.

There are four levels of physical interaction present in the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals. The first level consists of instances in which the figures forcefully grasp the animals, sometimes lifting them off the ground entirely. The next depicts the animals being restrained by the figures, who place their hands and/or arms upon the animals' bodies. On the third level, the animals are simply touched, with little forcefulness implied. The remaining examples are devoid of physical interaction; the animals stand beside the figures peacefully, apparently of their own volition.

The first aim of this chapter is to clarify two aspects of the criterion of divinity that is most frequently applied to these figures, which is the ability to control fantastic or powerful creatures. The first aspect concerns the manner in which the power over the animals is manifested; I appraise whether the different levels of interaction between the

figures and animals, outlined above, convey different messages regarding the status of the figures. Secondly, I assess whether there is any correlation between the species of animal with which the figures are depicted and their supposed status. In other words, I question whether only a figure flanked by fantastic creatures can be regarded as divine,¹⁰⁵ or whether the presence of terrestrial, domestic animals can also impart divine status to the central figure. An analysis of these two aspects will enable me to ascertain the extent to which it is possible to determine the nature of the central figures.

The second key issue to be addressed is the origin of the motifs. I noted in **1.2.1** that their appearance in the Aegean is often attributed to contact with the Near East, due to the far earlier attestation of male figures flanked by animals in the latter region compared to the Aegean. Examples of male and female figures flanked by animals in the Near East are provided below, with an outline of the potential methods by which these motifs could have been transported to the Aegean. However, while accepting that the appearance of the motifs was to some extent due to external influence, I aim to clarify and emphasise the contribution of Neopalatial glyptic to the iconography of these motifs in the Aegean.

In order to achieve these aims, the sub-group depicting male figures is organised first by the species of animals with which they are depicted and then by their level of interaction with the flanking animals. Regarding the female figures, the instances with frames are discussed first, the remaining examples being arranged by the animals' species and the level of interaction present.

¹⁰⁵ See **1.4.4.3** for references. In **1.4.3.3** I observed that the lion in certain contexts is regarded as a divine creature.

2.1.2 Iconographic Transference between the Aegean and the Near East

The motif of male figures flanked by animals first appeared in the Near East in Southern Mesopotamia at the end of the fourth millennium (Porada, 1948: 3). In this period and the following millennium, the central figures usually took the form of non-divine ‘heroes’ flanked by wild animals, which were sometimes protected from predators as part of a ‘contest scene’ (Porada, 1948: 3, 20).¹⁰⁶ It was only in the second millennium that divine males also started being depicted in the antithetic scheme (Porada, 1948: 69; Barclay, 2001: 374).¹⁰⁷

The motif of female figures flanked by animals, on the other hand, did not appear until the early second millennium in Syria and Anatolia, and always depicted divine figures, usually a nude goddess (Porada, 1948: 124; Barclay, 2001: 375).¹⁰⁸ Generally, in the Near East both the male and female figures grasp or restrain their flanking animals (Tamvaki, 1974: 284; Barclay, 2001: 374-376).¹⁰⁹ The flanking animals are broadly the same as those that appear in the Aegean and include herbivores, lions, and griffins (Crowley, 1989a: 38).

The early cylinders depicting male figures flanked by animals also demonstrate that the antithetic arrangement itself originated in the Near East, as Coldstream (1977: 4) and Crowley (1989a: 19-20) emphasise. This arrangement is not widely utilised in

¹⁰⁶ Examples from the late fourth millennium include a cylinder depicting a cyclopic male figure grasping a lion in each hand (Porada, 1948: pl.II, no.4a). A contemporary cylinder from Uruk depicts a male, non-heroic figure feeding two herbivores that stand to either side of him (Collon, 1987: 12, no.6). Cylinders from the third millennium depict ‘heroes’ restraining pairs of animals stood upon their hind-legs (Collon, 1987: 22, no.53) or grasping herbivores as they are attacked by lions (Porada, 1948: pl.XIII, nos.80-81; pl.XIV, no.89; pl.XXI, nos.131-135).

¹⁰⁷ A Middle Assyrian cylinder depicts a divine hero flanked by two ibexes that turn away from him to face a tree (Porada, 1948: pl.LXXXIV, no.600).

¹⁰⁸ A Syrian cylinder depicts a nude goddess lifting up the ends of her veil; she is flanked by a griffin and a lion (Porada, 1948: pl.CXLII, nos.937-940). Moreover, a winged female figure holds an antelope in either hand on two Mitannian cylinders (Porada, 1948: pl.CLVII, no.1030; pl.CLX, no.1051).

¹⁰⁹ See examples cited in the above notes. Additionally, the male figure on a Mitannian cylinder restrains two lions that are rearing up on their hind-legs (Porada, 1948: pl.CLIV, no.1010).

the Aegean until LM/LH II, with only a handful of examples occurring in LM IB (Crowley, 1989a: 21).¹¹⁰

The main way in which these motifs, and other iconographic elements, would have been transported to the Aegean is through imported artefacts, such as seals; as Crowley (1989a: 24-25) notes, these could then have been copied or imitated by a local engraver. Such Near Eastern artefacts started to appear in the Aegean in the transition from the Early to the Middle Bronze Age,¹¹¹ with contact between the two regions being firmly established by the early second millennium (Aruz, 2008: 50; Cline, 2009: 24). The evidence, thoroughly outlined by Aruz (2008) and Cline (2009), demonstrates that exchange continued into the Neopalatial Period and beyond until LM IIIC. The presence of imported Near Eastern cylinders indicates that knowledge of the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals, and so also the antithetic arrangement, was present in the Aegean by at least the sixteenth century (Crowley, 1989a: 196).¹¹²

Imported cylinders are attested on the mainland from at least LH II, with examples being discovered at Mycenae and Tiryns (Cline, 2009: 9).¹¹³ The largest, most significant group of imported cylinders is the hoard from the New Palace at Thebes, published and analysed by Porada (1981: 1-70), and dating to LH IIIB. The cylinders were almost exclusively made of lapis lazuli and consist of Kassite, Mitannian, Cypriot, and Mesopotamian cylinders of different styles; many of the latter class had come to Thebes via Cyprus (Porada, 1981: 40-41, 46, 68). Alongside them was found the

¹¹⁰ A possible early example is II.8.256 (the ‘Mother of the Mountains’ seal-type), described in 2.3.4. Additional examples are cited in 3.3.6 and 3.4.3.

¹¹¹ An example of such an artefact is the Syrian cylinder VS.1B.332 from an EM II-MM IB context at Mochlos, which depicts a seated god and a crescent and star above (Aruz, 2000: 3-4).

¹¹² The Old Babylonian cylinder XI.287 was discovered at Ayia Triadha but does not derive from a datable context. It depicts standing figures with a star and crescent above, which are similar to those described in 4.2.1, 4.2.3, and 4.3.1.

¹¹³ The Mitannian cylinders IS.6 and VS.1B.80 were discovered in tombs at Mycenae, in LH I-II and LH IIB-IIIA2 contexts respectively. The Mitannian Elaborate Style cylinder IS.19 from the ‘Tiryns Treasure’ depicts two bull-men flanking a standard.

Aegean cylinder V.675 depicting a male figure flanked by animals, which is discussed in 2.2.2. Several different theories have been proposed in an attempt to explain the presence of such a large number of foreign seals at Thebes.¹¹⁴ One of the more attractive suggestions is that they were the raw material of a Theban artisan, which explains why many of the cylinders were abraded (Cline, 2009: 26), in addition to the presence of the un-engraved cylindrical rolls of lapis lazuli discovered with them.

Further incontrovertible proof that artefacts such as seals were being transported between the Aegean and Near East in the LBA is provided by two shipwrecks discovered off the coast of Turkey. The Uluburun and Cape Gelidonya shipwrecks date to LB IIIA-B and LB IIIB-C respectively and their contents testify to the existence of trade routes encompassing the Aegean, Cyprus, Egypt, and the Near East in those periods (Cline, 2009: 100-101). Seals and other types of jewellery were discovered on both wrecks, in addition to raw materials such as copper. On the Uluburun wreck was discovered a gold pendant bearing the repoussé figure of a standing nude woman grasping a small gazelle in each hand (KW 703; Bass et al., 1989: 2, 4, fig.3). Bass et al. (1989: 2, 4) and Cline (2009: 141) identify it as an item of Syro-Palestinian manufacture. These shipwrecks clearly demonstrate the means by which both physical objects and iconographic ideas could be transported from the Near East and other regions to the Aegean.

2.2 Male Figures Flanked by Animals

This sub-group consists of sixteen hard stone lentoids, two soft stone lentoids, one hard stone ring, one hard stone cylinder, and eleven seal-types that appear upon

¹¹⁴ Porada (1981: 69-70) suggests that the Kassite cylinders were booty from Babylon sent to Thebes by the Assyrian king Tikulti-Ninurta I in a bid to gain the allegiance of the Mycenaeans against the Hittites.

sealings.¹¹⁵ Five of the lentoids, the stone ring, and the cylinder were excavated on the mainland, as were six of the seal-types. The only artefacts securely attributed to Crete are the other five seal-types, all of which were discovered at Knossos. The sub-group has one secure Minoan precursor, which is a steatite prism from Mallia.

By far the most commonly attested species is the lion, which appears at least sixteen times, but herbivores, daemons, and griffins occur too. On two examples, two different species of flanking animals are depicted in the same scene. The attestations of the sub-group that include fantastic creatures are discussed first, followed by those with lions. The examples are further arranged by the manner of the interaction between the figures and animals, with the more physical instances always discussed first.

I exclude from discussion the unprovenanced lentoid XI.301, which depicts a man holding two lions by their midribs or hind-legs, their bodies hanging down limply, which strongly suggests that they are dead. Younger (1995: 185) includes this scene in his catalogue of examples of the motif of male figures flanked by animals; however, these figures are always flanked by living creatures. The scene on XI.301 should be interpreted as a symmetrical arrangement of a hunter carrying his prey (Morgan, 1995: 139). It therefore articulates a very different message regarding the male figure's relationship with the animals compared to the motif under discussion.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ I exclude the fragmentary sealing II.8.251 from Knossos as only the left-hand part of the scene remains. A male figure stands with one arm horizontally outstretched, with a rampant animal, either a dog or a lion, below it. The male figure's torso appears to be in profile, a rendering that is never associated with this figure. Moreover, the remains of an object can be seen above his remaining arm, which again is unparalleled in the motif-group. The sealing is insufficiently preserved to propose a reconstruction; therefore, its exclusion is the wisest course of action, *contra* Younger (1995: 185).

¹¹⁶ A parallel for the symmetrical arrangement of the hunting theme is provided by the seal-type II.8.238 from Knossos, which depicts a hunter carrying a boar and a goat that hang from a pole carried across his shoulders.

2.2.1 Male Figures Flanked by Fantastic Creatures

The first two seals both show a male figure grasping daemons. On XI.36 from Phigalia and XI.290 (an unprovenanced agate lentoid) he holds the daemons by the tongue and ear respectively, apparently lifting them off the floor in the latter example. The grasping of an animal by its tongue is unparalleled in the Aegean and I am unaware of any instances of it in the Near East, where the animals are usually held by the throat or hind-legs.¹¹⁷ On XI.36 the daemons are empty-handed and reach towards the man's waist, whereas those on XI.290 hold ewers. It is not necessarily the case that the daemons on XI.290 are offering the ewers to the man; rather than an offering, the ewer was simply an attribute of the daemon (Gill, 1964: 7).

The figures' clear dominance over the daemons, combined with the fact that daemons are known to appear with deities, as on the Tiryns Daemon Ring (discussed in 4.3.1), could indicate that the figures on XI.36 and XI.290 are gods. However, daemons do not just serve deities, as Rehak (1995b: 223) notes. A lentoid from Voundeni near Patras (VS.1B.153) depicts a daemon carrying a man over its shoulder. Despite his limp body, the man's right arm is lifted to his chest, suggesting that he is still alive (Pini, 1993: 169). This counts against Crowley's (2008: 279) implausible suggestion that this seal represents a daemon with its human prey. It is preferable to see this image as an example of the daemon's role as the hunter's aide, perhaps carrying a man who was injured in the hunt. This is also alluded to on XI.208, a cylinder from Kakovatos, where a daemon places its paws around a hunter's knife, probably in a protective gesture, as he thrusts it towards a lion (Evans, 1935: 462; Bloedow, 1992: 297).

There was thus an implicit understanding that daemons were not only

¹¹⁷ See the examples cited above.

subservient to deities but also, though to a lesser extent, hunters, and perhaps human figures possessing authority (Rehak, 1995b: 223). The flanking of a figure by daemons is therefore insufficient to prove that such a figure is divine.

Considering the whole sub-group, a secure case for divinity can only be made for the figure on V.201, a lapis lacedaemonius lentoid reputedly from Kydonia. The man makes a point of not touching the animals: he places his hands upon his chest. On the right is a daemon holding a ewer, which is paired with a winged goat on the left, although Pini (1981: 143; 1992: 17) points out that it was originally engraved as a lion, as indicated by its long tail and dotted paws. The key to ascertaining the figure's identity lies in the fact that he is stood upon horns of consecration, which is surely a divine prerogative (Evans, 1935: 401). It is possible that in certain contexts the horns of consecration could be substituted for a cult building, as on VI.284 discussed in 4.2.2, so the man on V.201 could be regarded as equivalent in status to the goddesses who seat themselves upon cult structures. This establishes that the symmetrical arrangement of a figure flanked by animals was used to portray deities. It is important to emphasise that it is not the fact that the figure on V.201 is flanked by animals, even fantastic ones, alone that designates him a god; this criterion is combined with the fact that he is stood upon a cult marker.

Pini (1981: 144-145) suggests that V.201 was influenced by Cypro-Aegean glyptic, if not engraved on Cyprus itself. Firstly, winged goats are far more common in Cypro-Aegean glyptic compared to that of the Aegean;¹¹⁸ moreover, lapis lacedaemonius was exported from Cyprus in the LBA (Pini, 1981: 144-145). I would suggest that the fact that the scene was engraved upon a lentoid, rather than a cylinder,

¹¹⁸ Winged goats perhaps only appear once more in glyptic, on the lentoid V.400 from Medeon (Pini, 1981: 144-145).

indicates that V.201 was engraved in the Aegean (Younger, 1986: 133). However, I agree that the presence of the winged goat was inspired by Cypro-Aegean glyptic, which also influenced the iconography of V.669, a discussion of which follows.

The first of only two attestations of male figures flanked by one or more griffins occurs upon a stopper from Thebes impressed by a soft stone seal bearing V.669. A schematically rendered man is flanked by two creatures with legs touching the edges of the iconographic field. Their heads cannot be clearly discerned but the long diagonally banded strips next to the man's body can be read as their wings; the animals, therefore, must be griffins. Those that flank female figures always stand in a realistic pose, either with all four paws on the ground or with their forepaws slightly raised. The griffins on V.669, however, recall the poses of the lions on I.89 and IS.27 below, as the contrasting banding on their wings demonstrates that one griffin is hanging upside-down whereas the other is upright.

The clear differences between the griffins on V.669 and those flanking female figures, in both pose and features, perhaps excludes seals depicting the latter figures as possible sources of inspiration for V.669's design. This inspiration more probably derived from Cypriot and Cypro-Aegean glyptic, which more frequently used griffins as flanking creatures with male figures, as on the cylinder V.657 from Rhodes. Moreover, the cylinders discovered in the New Palace at Thebes demonstrate that Cypriot cylinders had been arriving at Thebes from at least the end of the fifteenth century (Porada, 1981: 68).¹¹⁹ The fact that the impressing seal was made of soft stone raises the possibility that V.669 was engraved in LH IIIA-B1, by which point the influence of Cypriot glyptic could have become well established at Thebes.

¹¹⁹ A clearer example of Cypriot influence at Thebes is provided by V.675 below.

The only other example depicting a male figure with a griffin in this sub-group is II.3.167, a steatite lentoid allegedly from Knossos. Unusually, in place of a second griffin, the man is accompanied by a lion. The body of the male figure has almost entirely worn away so it is difficult to ascertain whether he was originally depicted holding the animals. Both the griffin and lion stand upon their hind-legs with their forepaws perhaps touching the figure's torso. The lion's appearance in an equal position to the griffin on this seal exemplifies Wedde's (1995: 500-501) statement that the lion can function as a fantastic creature.

2.2.2 Male Figures Flanked by Lions

Male figures are more commonly depicted physically interacting with the lions, so these examples are discussed next, starting with the seven examples in which the lions are lifted off the ground. On I.89, a red jasper ring from Mycenae, the rendering of the man is very naturalistic: he has clear facial features, including a beard, and his musculature is evident. The left lion is held by its hind-leg and hangs upside-down, while that on the right is grasped by its throat. A similar arrangement appears upon IS.27 from Prosymna: the left lion is held by its hind-leg and the other by its ear. The man's face is crudely rendered, compared with that on I.89, and he has the more commonly used drill-holes to indicate hair. More elaborate is the engraving of VS.2.113 from Elateia-Alonaki (fig.1). Here the lions, which are mane-less, are held by their hind-legs. The man has clearly defined muscles and the engraver has attempted to realistically render his face. The two drill-holes parallel with the figure's waist are probably fillers.

The next example is the cylinder V.675 from Thebes, referred to above, which

shows a man holding two lions by their tails or hind-legs. Despite the fact that it was found alongside many foreign cylinders, V.675 was probably the work of an Aegean engraver (Porada, 1981: 9; Krzyszkowska, 2005: 302). Nonetheless, it was clearly influenced directly by foreign styles, as Aruz (2000: 6) observes. This is most evident in the inclusion to the side of the main scene of a secondary iconographic group consisting of a griffin attacking a stag. The closest correspondence appears upon the Cypro-Aegean cylinder Find No.203, also from the Thebes hoard, which depicts an almost identical scene of a stag being attacked by a griffin that this time accompanies a man stabbing a lion (Porada, 1981: 22-23).¹²⁰ The iconography of V.675 therefore provides a clear example of the Cypriot influence that was present at Thebes, witnessed previously on V.669.

On three examples the male figures hold the lions by the ears alone so that they hang facing inwards, as on the unprovenanced haematite lentoid IX.153. On VS.1B.154, a damaged lentoid from Voundeni near Patras, the head of the left lion is missing but it is likely that it was held in the same manner as its companion. On the sealing II.8.252 from Knossos a lion hangs by its ear from the man's hand, stretching its forepaws towards him. The right-hand section of the scene is missing but it can be assumed that a second lion held a similar pose. The man's hair consists of the usual drill-holes but above is a triangle, which could represent a helmet or hat. He is, therefore, the only figure in the sub-group who wears headgear.

The lions can more accurately be described as being restrained in four further examples. On VS.1B.62 from Asine (fig.2) the lions, which are mane-less, stand upon their hind-legs and rest their forepaws upon the man's waist. He in turn places both

¹²⁰ Other Cypro-Aegean cylinders that depict male figures flanked by animals in combination with other motifs include the cylinders II.3.199, possibly from Astraki, and VII.173, attributed to Golgoi on Cyprus.

hands upon the lions' necks. An unprovenanced lapis lacedaemonius lentoid (XI.177) bears a very similar arrangement. The third example of this scheme appears upon II.8.249, a sealing from Knossos. The edges of the sealing are missing, including part of the head of the left animal, but the large manes indicate that both are lions.¹²¹ The man touches the lions' manes in the same manner as that on XI.177. Both the lions on II.8.249 have frontal faces, in contrast to the majority of the animals depicted with male figures, which usually turn their heads towards the centre of the scene. The final example in which the man restrains lions occurs upon XI.257, an unprovenanced hard stone lentoid; the figure rests his hands upon the lions' necks. The lions stand with their forelegs supported by two small pedestals.

On two examples, the male figures stretch their arms out horizontally but their physical interaction with the lions is less clear. The lions on VI.312, an agate lentoid attributed to Crete, are placed in a rampant pose facing inwards. The male figure may be holding them by their ears but this is unclear as his hands blend into the lions' heads. On the seal-type II.8.250 from Knossos the lions hold exactly the same pose as those on VI.312 but the man's hands hover just above their ears.

On a further two examples there is clearly no contact between the male figures and lions. On III.361, a hard stone lentoid attributed to Knossos, the man crosses his arms upon his chest. The lions stand upon their hind-legs and face outwards, their forepaws apparently resting upon the curved edge of the seal-face. The man on II.3.193, an agate lentoid allegedly from Poros, holds exactly the same pose. The forepaws of the flanking animals are raised off the ground, paralleling the stance of those on XI.257 above. The animals do not have manes, but nor do they have collars, worn by the dogs

¹²¹ Traces of a rope can be seen near the man's waist, which led Nilsson (1950: 358) to suggest that the lions are being restrained on leashes. The sealing, however, is too damaged to attempt a full reconstruction of the scene.

on II.8.248 below, indicating that they are mane-less lions, as Müller (2000: 184) notes.

The last example showing a man with two lions is IV.293, a damaged soft stone lentoid attributed to Crete. The gender of the central figure is not immediately apparent, but the marks around the waist recall a girdle and the lack of clear breasts and flowing hair strongly suggest that the figure is male. The syntax of the scene is very unusual: the lions rear up on their hind-legs and are significantly taller than the figure, who raises his arms towards their forelegs. It almost appears as if he is being overwhelmed by the lions. Alternatively, as the scene has not been completely preserved, it is possible that the figure was originally depicted restraining the lions by placing his hands upon their forelegs. This seal has been associated with LM I glyptic by Younger (1983: 124), partly based on its style and soft material. It is possible that it was an early version of the motif, but, without a secure context, this should not be over-stated.

2.2.3 Male Figures Flanked by Other Creatures

The remaining ten examples depict male figures flanked by creatures including herbivores and fish. Three examples show the figures lifting the animals off the ground. The first is a jasper lentoid of unknown origin (VIII.147), which shows two bulls hanging just below the man's hands. It is unclear how he is grasping them as their legs and tails are turned away from him. Above his hands are circles that Goodison (1989: 84) suggests are balls representing the sun. The lack of solar imagery in the rest of the sub-group indicates that a more mundane explanation should be preferred: the 'balls' are simply drill-marks, as Tamvaki (1974: 272) points out, which perhaps acted as fillers. On V.181, a lapis lacedaemonius lentoid attributed to Crete, the man grasps two large fish. This is the only artefact showing a male figure flanked by sea creatures,

which occur several times with female figures. V.181 contrasts with the other examples of men lifting creatures off the ground as the scene depicted is physically achievable. The significance of this is addressed below.

A damaged sealing from Mycenae (VS.1B.49) depicts a male figure with his arms raised just above horizontal. The animals hang down by their tails or hind-legs. Despite the fact that the animals' heads are missing (as is the man's), they can tentatively be identified as either dogs or lions, suggested by their slender bodies and tails. The sealing was probably impressed by a hard stone cushion or a metal ring, which suggests that it was an heirloom at the time of the sealing's firing in LH IIIB1-2.

On a further three examples the animals are restrained. The seal-type I.163 from Mycenae depicts a male figure restraining two long-horned goats by placing his hands upon their necks.¹²² A cruder version of this scene is depicted upon IV.D38, a lapis lacedaemonius lentoid of unknown origin.¹²³ The man reaches out to touch the necks of two long-horned goats. The horizontal line just above his waist is presumably a girdle.

The third example that shows the animals being restrained is II.8.248, a damaged sealing from Knossos, on which the man is flanked by two large dogs that are sat upon their haunches. He restrains them by means of leashes fixed to their collars. This is exceptional, as no other figures in this sub-group use aids to subdue their animals, nor are they securely associated with dogs. The depiction on this sealing is therefore more realistic than most other examples in the sub-group, in which the

¹²² Long horns that curve at the tip, as do those on I.163, may have been used to designate *agrimia*, their domesticated cousins having shorter horns that curve towards the cheek (Younger, 1988: xviii). However, Hiller (2001: 293) argues that there is no clear way to distinguish between wild and domesticated goats in glyptic. For this reason, I generally use the broad terms 'goat' or 'caprid' and avoid attempting a more precise designation of the species depicted. Similarly, the term 'bull' is here used to refer to any type of bovine.

¹²³ This seal was relegated to the 'Gemma Dubitanda' section of *CMS IV* and Marinatos (1993: 167) also notes doubts regarding its authenticity. However, it is made of lapis lacedaemonius, which Betts (1965: 203) stresses (in relation to V.201) was rarely used by forgers because it was difficult to acquire. This speaks strongly in favour of IV.D38's authenticity.

animals usually execute impossible poses and/or are lifted off the ground, a point noted by Younger (1995: 153). The possibility that this scene may have possessed a subtly different meaning is further suggested by the fact that the sealing was impressed by a metal ring, which is unattested elsewhere in this sub-group.

The next two scenes show a male figure simply touching the animals. Those on the sealing II.8.253 from Knossos are of an uncertain species. They stand upon their hind-legs and have very pronounced ears; they are either dogs or mane-less lions. The man lowers his arms, with his hands lightly touching the animals' backs. On V.594, a sealing from Mycenae, an antlered deer lifts its nose to the man's raised hands so that its forepaws lift off the ground. The lower body and head of the right-hand animal are missing but it is probably also a deer. Tamvaki (1974: 272) reasonably dates the soft stone lentoid that impressed the sealing to LH IIIA-B.

The final two examples depict male figures refraining from touching the animals. The seal-type I.356 is attested on damaged sealings from Pylos. The man has a stocky, V-shaped torso and lowers his hands to his hips. To either side of him stand two quadrupeds that are probably herbivores. The crude rendering of the image closely parallels that of the sealing I.344, also from Pylos, described in 2.3.3. Tamvaki (1985: 286; 1989: 265) reasonably suggests that this indicates that the seals that impressed the sealings were made in the same workshop, perhaps in LH IIIB. VS.3.370 is a seal-type that occurs on two damaged LH IIIB2 sealings from Thebes. The male figure is well preserved but the heads of the flanking animals are missing. They stand upon their hind-legs with their necks craning back and their forelegs apart. Their slender bodies and hooves suggest that they are caprids. The pose of the male figure is unusual: he reaches upwards with his right arm at an almost vertical angle while his left arm reaches across

to his right shoulder. Nonetheless, the inclusion of VS.3.370 within this sub-group is justified on the basis of the symmetrical pose of the flanking animals.

2.2.4 Interpretation

I noted above that figures that dominate daemons, griffins, and lions are usually interpreted as gods. Laffineur (1992: 107), however, reasonably suggests that many of these figures are rulers. This identification cannot be as readily applied to the men flanked by terrestrial, less fearsome creatures. Indeed, it is possible to view the men on I.163, IV.D38, and perhaps on I.356 as shepherds, and that on V.181 as a fisherman, as Younger (1988: 163) does, because these figures hold real creatures in physically achievable poses.

However, to argue that the scenes with goats and fish represent idealised scenes from everyday life, which is a theme generally absent in LBA glyptic, as K. Galanakis (2005: 5) observes, whereas the figures with lions and griffins are rulers or gods is to impose a divide that simply does not exist. This is confirmed by the fact that scenes with more ‘low status’ animals are not restricted to low status media, such as soft stones: V.181 depicting a ‘fisherman’ was engraved upon a seal of lapis lacedaemonius. Moreover, regarding herbivores, Bloedow (2001: 8) reasonably suggests that agrimia, which may be depicted upon I.163, were very challenging prey due to their agility, hence their capture would have been highly desirable. There was, therefore, no clear-cut difference in status between the different flanking animals. All of them, except the griffins and daemons (which only occur five times), were the quarry of humans, and all were certainly creatures over which a man would desire dominance, whether on the hunt or in an imaginary world. A clear connection between the motif and hunting is present

on II.8.248: the man could be identified as a hunter, since dogs were commonly used in this pursuit.

Finally, Thomas & Wedde (2001: 9) note that the lion in particular is a powerful political animal, as is most dramatically demonstrated by the Lion Gate relief at Mycenae, which explains why it is the most frequently attested animal in this subgroup. Regarding the animals as creatures to be dominated is more reasonable than viewing them as guardians or protectors of the central figure, which is a theory proposed by Marinatos (1988b: 117). As Bloedow (1999: 61) rightly points out, divine or semi-divine figures do not require protection.

2.2.5 Minoan Precursors and Origins

The only secure Minoan precursor is a steatite prism from Mallia known by the designation *GGFR* fig.31, which probably dates to MM II-III A (Bloedow, 2001: 7).¹²⁴ The man restrains two long-horned goats that are sat upon their haunches by placing his hands upon their necks. Tamvaki (1985: 286) theorises that this scene depicts a shepherd holding two of his flock as the animals are terrestrial and are realistically arranged. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that another side of the prism depicts men in a boat with fish swimming below. These men are almost certainly fishermen, which would be consistent with the prism's theme of depicting men at work. There is no reason to doubt that this prism was an indigenous Minoan creation, following Spartz (1962: 22-39). However, the fact that the motif of male figures flanked

¹²⁴ Two earlier artefacts have been excluded here as Minoan precursors. The first is an EM III ivory seal in the shape of a bird's head from Sphoungaras (Hall, 1912: 53, fig.25a). Its base depicts a standing man touching a dog on the left and a creature tentatively interpreted by Hall (1912: 52) as a snake on the right, although it appears to be sat upon a rectangular box. The second example appears upon the ivory cylinder II.1.442b, from an EM II-MM IA context in the Trapeza Cave, and shows a figure standing between two forms that may represent animals. Their early date, combined with their poor state of preservation, indicates that they should be disassociated from the motif under discussion (Tamvaki, 1974: 283-284).

by animals is not attested in the Neopalatial Period perhaps precludes a purely Aegean origin for the motif. It is likely that, rather than representing a motif that was prevalent in the Aegean in MM II-III A, *GGFR* fig.31 represents a unique composition that was distinct from the LBA versions.¹²⁵

There are no secure Minoan examples of the antithetic motif, but a motif with only one animal, usually a lion, is widely attested in the Neopalatial Period. It occurs at Ayia Triadha, Zakros, and Knossos and is an indigenous Cretan motif.¹²⁶ The animals are never grasped; instead, they stand peacefully beside the standing male figures in a manner that makes clear the figures' (non-physical) power over them (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 204). The status of the men is unclear; Marinatos (1993: 243) reasonably suggests that the desire of the Neopalatial elite to portray themselves in a divine form resulted in the fusion of royal and divine iconography. These figures, therefore, could be high status males portraying themselves as gods (Marinatos, 1993: 169-171). The motif of the standing man with a single lion thus perhaps serves the same function as that with two lions: it makes plain the power and dominance of the men, whether they are gods or humans. It is thus possible that it was a precursor of the motif with two animals, which became prevalent after LM IB. It was not replaced by the latter motif: standing men with one lion continued to appear on LM/LH I-II seals, as on the amygdaloids II.3.27 from Knossos and VS.1B.77 from Mycenae.

However, there are several differences between the motif with one lion and the antithetic motif. Principally, these are the addition of the second animal, the inclusion of

¹²⁵ Other antithetic groups appeared occasionally in EM-MM III glyptic in addition to *GGFR* fig.31, as on VI.129, a MM II agate petschaft attributed to East Crete that depicts two goats with their forelegs symmetrically placed upon a mound of rocks.

¹²⁶ The seal-types II.6.36 and II.7.27 derive from the LM IB deposits at Ayia Triadha and Zakros respectively. The examples from Knossos are II.3.24, a lentoid from a LM IB context behind the South House, and II.8.237, a seal-type attested in the Eastern Temple Repository.

animals other than lions, and the more physical relationship between the men and animals. These changes are sufficient to suggest that an external influence, specifically from the Near East, was responsible for the adoption of the antithetic motif, *contra* Spartz (1962: 22-39). The Near East was already influencing Cretan glyptic in the Neopalatial Period, as evidenced by the appearance in this period of male figures wearing 'Syrian' banded robes (Evans, 1935: 404-420; Marinatos, 1993: 167; Aruz, 2000: 7). Marinatos (1993: 167) argues that in the Neopalatial Period the Cretan elite was 'actively seeking inspiration' from other countries to express its ideology, that is, its power and dominance. It is, therefore, possible that contact with the Near Eastern motif of standing men flanked by animals inspired the Minoans to arrange the motif of standing men with a single animal antithetically. The Near Eastern arrangement was thus combined with the parallel indigenous tradition of depicting men with lions that expressed a very similar or identical idea, which explains how it came to be fully integrated into the Aegean repertoire in LM/LH II (Crowley, 1989a: 208). Lions continued to be the animals with which the men were most frequently associated.

Not all examples of the antithetic motif were necessarily inspired by the Minoan motif with a single lion. It is possible that some of the mainland artefacts showing men violently grasping the animals, as was common in the Near East, were directly inspired by contact with that area, without interaction with Neopalatial glyptic (Marinatos, 1988b: 114; Hiller, 2001: 297). The Cretan examples of men grasping animals, such as II.8.252, could likewise have been more heavily inspired by Near Eastern glyptic than that of the Neopalatial Period, whether directly, or indirectly through contact with the mainland.

This analysis can be utilised in order to re-assess the possible nature(s) of the

central figures. The Near Eastern and Neopalatial motifs were both used to depict high status mortals, including members of the elite and (probably only in the Near East) 'heroes' (Collon, 1987: 27; Barclay, 2001: 374). This perhaps counts in favour of the theory, noted above, that some of the men depicted in the Aegean antithetic motif were high status mortals rather than gods. The purpose of the motif, however, was not to convey a message regarding the exact nature of the standing figures; it was the fact that the men had control (whether physical or not) over the animals that was significant.

Table 1: Provenanced Examples of Male Figures Flanked by Animals*

No.	XI.36	V.669	I.89	IS.27	VS.2.113	V.675	VS.1B.154	IL.8.252	VS.1B.62
Date (Context)	Unknown	LH III B2	Unclear	LH IIIA1-B	LH IIIA-Proto-Geometric	LH IIIB	LH III B1-2	None	None
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LH IIIA2-B	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM II-III A	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Phigalia	Thebes	Mycenae	Prosymna	Elateia	Thebes	Patras	Knossos	Asine
Exact Find-Spot	Unknown	New Palace, Archive	Tomb 58	Tomb 33, side-chamber	Elateia-Alonaki cemetery, Tomb 63	New Palace, Treasure Room	Voundeni cemetery, Tomb 4	Little Palace, Main Staircase	Barbouna cemetery, Tomb 5
Shape	L	Stopper (1, L), impressed 7 times	R	L	L	Cylinder	L	Nodule (1, L?)	L
Material	Rock crystal	(SS)	Jasper	Agate	Agate	Agate	Rock crystal	(HS)	Carnelian
Species of Animal	Daemons	Griffins	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions	Lions
Figure's Contact with Animals	Grasping by tongue	No contact	Grasping by hind-leg/throat	Grasping by hind-leg/ear	Grasping by hind-legs	Grasping by tail/hind-leg	Grasping by ears	Grasping by ears	Restraining with hands on lions' necks

* The numbers in brackets after sealings indicate the number of sealings upon which the seal-type is attested. The letters in brackets indicate the probable shape and material of the artefact that made the impression.

Table 1 Cont.

No.	II.8.249	II.8.250	VS.1B.49	I.163	II.8.248	II.8.253	V.594	I.356	VS.3.370
Date (Context)	None	None	LH IIIB1-2	LH IIIB	LM IIIA	None	LH IIIB2	LH IIIB2	LH IIIB
Date (Stylistic)	LM II-III A	LM II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LH IIIA2-B	LM II-III A	LM II-III A	LH IIIA2-B	LH IIIA2-B	LH II-III A
Find Place	Knossos	Knossos	Mycenae	Mycenae	Knossos	Knossos	Mycenae	Pylos	Thebes
Exact Find-Spot	Little Palace, Room North of the Shrine	Palace, Lower East-West Corridor	Panagia Ridge, House II, Room 15	House of the Sphinxes, Room 1, doorway	Palace, Archives Deposit	Little Palace, Room South of the Room of the Fetish	South House	Palace, Wine Magazine, Room 104	New Palace, Treasure Room
Shape	Nodule (1, L)	Nodules (3, L)	Nodule (1, C/R?)	Nodules (7, L)	Nodule (1, R)	Nodule (1, L)	Nodule (1, L)	Nodules (3, R/L)	Nodules (2, L)
Material	(HS)	(HS)	(HS/M)	(SS)	(M)	(HS)	(SS)	(SS?)	(HS)
Species of Animal	Lions	Lions	Dogs/lions	Long-horned goats	Large dogs	Dogs/lions	Deer	Herbivores	Caprids?
Figure's Contact with Animals	Restraining with hands placed on lions' necks	No contact	Grasping by tail/hind-leg	Restraining with hands placed on goats' necks	Restraining on leashes	Touching on backs	Touching on noses	No contact	No contact

2.3 Female Figures Flanked by Animals

This sub-group consists of fourteen hard stone lentoids, one soft stone lentoid, one hard stone amygdaloid, one hard stone prism, and four seal-types that appear upon sealings. Twelve of these have secure provenances, which lie in the Peloponnese, Attica, Crete, and Rhodes. There are no secure Minoan precursors.

The first artefacts to be discussed are those that depict female figures with frames above their heads, which make up a large proportion of the sub-group. The women never touch the animals; in every case, they raise their hands to the frames as if supporting their weight. The remaining ten artefacts depict women without frames; the difference in iconography between these examples and those with frames is assessed in 2.3.4. These examples are organised by the species of animal, with griffins first, and then by the manner in which the female figures interact with the animals, beginning with those in which no physical interaction is present (as these are the most common) and ending with the few examples in which the animals are grasped. Throughout the sub-group the animals in each scene are always identical in species and pose.

I exclude from this sub-group two unprovenanced serpentine lentoids, II.3.327 and VI.333. They both depict crudely rendered standing female figures flanked by sea creatures, which hang upside-down and are not touched. In terms of their material, content, and schematic execution, both lentoids should be grouped with the soft stone lentoids that depict solitary female figures of uncertain status with one arm raised, accompanied by different floating symbols, which are dated to LM I (Younger, 1983: 117-118, 123-127; Tamvaki, 1989: 264).¹²⁷ The resemblance to II.3.327 and VI.333 is closest on II.3.3 and VIII.128, on which floating elements (stars and ovals respectively)

¹²⁷ Examples include II.3.171, II.3.304, III.348, and III.351. This theme has most recently been discussed by Pini (2010: 332-333), who suggests that the women are adorants. II.8.258 (described below) provides a possible LM I parallel for the use of a dolphin as a floating symbol.

are likewise symmetrically arranged to either side of the female figures.

2.3.1 Female Figures with Frames

Eleven of the examples in this sub-group include frames.¹²⁸ Of the eight provenanced examples, four are from the mainland, three are from Crete, and one is from Rhodes. The animals that most commonly flank women with frames are griffins and lions, with horned quadrupeds appearing twice and daemons once. The frames themselves occur in two varieties: double and triple.¹²⁹ They always curve upwards towards the ends and they usually have an additional curve in the centre, above the woman's head, which is sometimes only subtle. On I.144 and I.145 there are three small vertical lines to either side of the woman's head. In at least four cases a double axe floats above the centre of the frames.¹³⁰ The double and triple frames appear to have been interchangeable and there is no correlation between the presence of the double axe and any other aspect of the scene.

The first four examples depict griffins, which always have their wings displayed. On the lentoid II.3.63 from Knossos the woman's head resembles an inverted 'T' with dots below the horizontal axis recalling eyes. Pini (1984: xxv-xxix, xlii-xliii) suggests that this seal was engraved on the mainland, indicated by its material (agate) and its large size: it has a diameter of 3.1-3.5cm compared to the more usual 1.5-2.5cm range. Moreover, it was discovered in one of the 'warrior graves' that included bronze weapons, which Popham (1994: 90, 93) argues were the graves of Mycenaeans who

¹²⁸ XIII.39 depicts a small female figure wearing double frames perched upon a heavily stylised tree flanked by griffins and is discussed in 3.3.5.

¹²⁹ Double frames appear upon I.144, I.145, II.3.63, and V.654, whereas the frames on I.379, II.3.276, II.8.255, VI.316, VI.317, and X.242 are triple. On XI.112 they are a mixture of double and triple.

¹³⁰ A double axe is clearly depicted on I.144, I.145, II.3.63, and II.8.255. The haft and lower tips of the blades of a double axe can be detected on V.654. Only the blades are depicted on I.379.

arrived on Crete after LM IB.

These arguments have been challenged by Niemeier (1997: 301), who first refers to large seals from Neopalatial contexts, such as II.3.145 from Mallia, which has a diameter greater than 2.0cm. Secondly, he argues that there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that agate was not used in the Neopalatial Period, emphasising that most of the glyptic information from this time derives from sealings (Niemeier, 1997: 299-300). Finally, Niemeier (1997: 304-305) points out that Kilian-Dirlmeier's (1985: 208-211) analysis of the Poros tombs has demonstrated that the practice of burials with weapons was present in the Neopalatial Period and so was not a purely Mycenaean feature. There is, therefore, insufficient evidence to prove that II.3.63 was engraved on the mainland, or that it was heavily influenced by mainland glyptic. It is likely that the trend favouring larger seals, as well as the rising popularity of agate, was common to both the mainland and Crete in LM/LH II and that neither are necessarily indicative of mainland influence (Niemeier, 1997: 300-302; Krzyszkowska, 2005: 239-240).

The griffins on V.654, a lentoid from Rhodes (fig.3), are very similar in terms of pose and style to those on II.3.63. In this case, however, they stand upon a sloping groundline emanating from the level of the woman's knees. Three vertical lines can be seen above the frames' centre, which are presumably the remains of the double axe (the edge of the seal is damaged). The woman's head is aniconic. Nilsson (1950: 362), Pini (1983: 39-45; 2002: 18), and Younger (1995: 154, 183-184) regard this as a feature that was restricted to LM I glyptic. Indeed, the clearest examples of figures with aniconic heads are the frontally rendered women on the Archanes, Isopata, and Vapheio Rings, all of which date to LM I. However, not all Neopalatial rings use this convention: male and female figures depicted in processions on several LM IB sealings impressed by

rings have discernible facial features.¹³¹ Moreover, VS.1B.114, discussed in 5.2.2, provides a comparable example of the use of aniconity on a later artefact. The aniconic nature of the woman's head is, therefore, insufficient to date V.654 to LM I, especially when its provenance in a LH IIIC1 context on Rhodes is taken into account. Aniconic renderings do more frequently occur on Neopalatial rings, but they are certainly not restricted to artefacts of that shape or date.

On VI.317, a carnelian lentoid attributed to the Dictaeon Cave, the groundline upon which the griffins stand is flat but again it is raised to the height of the woman's knees. Her body is portrayed quite naturalistically, with realistic (though large) breasts. Her head, however, is almost entirely enveloped by the frames. The seal is damaged on the left part of the field and is worn at the top so it is unclear as to whether a double axe was originally depicted above the frames.

The last example depicting the frames with griffins is a worn lentoid from Sphakia in East Crete (II.3.276). The woman's body is again rendered in a naturalistic manner but there is a chip in the stone where her head would be, so it is not possible to comment on how her head was illustrated. Moreover, one cannot know whether a double axe was originally suspended between the frames. The frames terminate in circular buds, which also appear on I.144, I.145, and X.242 below. Marinatos (1984: 120) suggests that these buds are the fruit of the date-palm.¹³² However, this is not convincing, chiefly because there is no uniformity in the way in which the buds are depicted. On I.144 and I.145 they are oval with a clear horizontal band below them,

¹³¹ On II.6.11 and II.6.12 from Ayia Triadha and II.7.16 from Zakros. Faint traces of facial features can also be detected upon the seated women on the Minoan seal-types VS.1A.175 and VS.1A.177 from Khania, discussed in 4.3.4 and 4.2.4 respectively.

¹³² Mylonas (1966: 152-154) likewise argues that the buds were connected with vegetation, but he differs in suggesting that the frames were made up of stalks formed into the shape of horns of consecration with seed vessels at the end.

which Marinatos (1984: 120) argues is characteristic of the fruit, whereas on II.3.276 the buds are circular with no bands. It is more likely that they are decorative elements. The lack of significance would explain why they were rendered in different ways and why they were more frequently omitted from the frames.

The next five examples depict lions. On two carnelian lentoids from Mycenae (I.144 and I.145) they stand upon their hind-legs facing towards the woman. The two lentoids are so similar (the curve of the lions' tails is the only noticeable difference) that Betts (1981: 5 n.16) is justified in reasoning that they were engraved by the same person. The women's heads are rendered in profile and they have some indications of facial features. The third example is VI.316, a hard stone lentoid attributed to the Knossos area. The lions have a very similar pose to those on I.144 and I.145 but the standard of engraving is a lot poorer. The woman's head appears to have been left blank but it is unclear as to whether the engraver meant to render it in an aniconic fashion.

The agate lentoids XI.112 (from Menidi) and X.242 (which is unprovenanced) depict the lions as if with conjoined bodies, with their hindquarters being obscured by the women. On the former seal, the woman's head resembles an inverted 'V' and the standard of engraving is generally poor: the frames exhibit a fusion of the double and triple forms with the result that they recall zigzags. Even more confusingly, strange frame-like projections emanate from the woman's waist. The only possible parallel for this is the Aegina Pendant (BM GR 1892.5-20.8, discussed below), on which the frames rise from between the male figure's waist and knees. However, the crude rendering of XI.112 raises the possibility that the frames have been carelessly mispositioned. In contrast, the head of the woman on X.242 can be described as aniconic, but, as the discussion above demonstrated, this is insufficient to indicate that this seal was

engraved in LM I, *contra* Younger (1995: 183).

On the next example, the sealing II.8.255 from Knossos, only the upper left part of the scene remains. A woman reaches out to touch her triple frames, above which are traces of a double axe. The one remaining animal has the slender body and long horns of a goat.

The final example of a woman with frames appears upon sealings from Pylos impressed by a metal ring (I.379). This scene is unique because it contains two sets of flanking animals. The two animals closest to the woman are horned and are either goats or bulls. Behind them are two daemons, although that on the right is missing where the edge of the scene has broken away. The haft of the double axe has been omitted and in its place is perhaps a star. The scene can also be regarded as unique for its naturalistic rendering: the woman has a well-proportioned body and the engraver has attempted to render a detailed profile face.

The inclusion of the second pair of creatures raises questions about the relationship between the different animals. The daemons carry sticks with a loop at one end, which they hold in the same manner as the ewers with which they are usually associated. Gill (1964: 11) suggests that the daemons are using the sticks to drive the quadrupeds towards the central figure (who Gill interprets as a goddess), who will receive them as a sacrifice. Horned animals frequently appear as sacrificial victims and they can be led and perhaps carried to sacrifice by daemons.¹³³ However, the antithetic arrangement of I.379 is in complete contrast to those scenes and it cannot be used to establish a link between the frames and sacrifice.¹³⁴ Moreover, daemons often attend deities in scenes containing no allusions to sacrifice, as on V.201 above and the Tiryns

¹³³ See 6.2.3 and 6.3.4. Hiller (2001: 298) regards all herbivores that flank the central figures as sacrificial victims.

¹³⁴ See below for additional arguments against a link between the frames and sacrifice.

Daemon Ring. It is probable that the engraver of I.379 simply decided to laterally extend the usual scene of a woman flanked by animals to include a second pair.

2.3.2 The Frames: Appearances Elsewhere in Iconography and Analysis

A potential candidate for the earliest attestation of the frames with a human figure is the Aegina Pendant, mentioned above. This gold ornament depicts a striding man wearing a kilt holding two geese by their necks. From behind his waist rise two frames with buds at the ends; this is the only instance in iconography in which a male figure is associated with frames. Higgins (1979: 20-23) dates the pendant to MM III, although this has been debated due to the lack of a secure provenance for the Aegina Treasure. Aruz (2008: 109) and Koehl (2011: 192-205) rightly stress the presence of non-Aegean elements, such as the male figure's kilt, his feathered headdress, and the papyrus, which, they argue, point to a place of manufacture in the Levant.¹³⁵ It is thus not a reliable representation of Aegean iconography. Moreover, Aruz (2008: 109) disputes the identification of the elements on the pendant as frames, instead interpreting them as lotus tendrils. The Aegina Pendant can therefore be excluded from the discussion, following the precedent set by Hägg & Lindau (1984: 73). As a result, the earliest secure attestation of the frames in association with a human figure should be dated to the emergence of the motif of female figures flanked by animals in LM/LH II, as Hägg & Lindau (1984: 75) and Krzyszkowska (2005: 204) maintain.

The earliest attestation of the frames in glyptic, independently of human figures, is upon a group of sealings from the LM IB deposit at Zakros associated with the 'Zakros Master'. The frames appear in single and double form, both with and without

¹³⁵ The shipwrecks referred to in 2.1.2 clearly indicate the methods by which foreign items of gold could reach the Aegean.

buds.¹³⁶ They are illustrated above the heads of lions, pigs, and bulls, being depicted above the horns in the case of the latter.¹³⁷ On seven seal-types the frames appear in the position of tusks, even with bulls and lions.¹³⁸

The unique nature of the ‘Zakros Master’ sealings is well known, hence it would be unwise to draw too many conclusions from them regarding the nature of the frames.¹³⁹ The main significance of the sealings lies in the fact that they prove that the frames pre-date the floruit of the motif of female figures flanked by animals.

More tentative evidence for the connection between the frames and animals (particularly bulls) in the Neopalatial Period is provided by two non-glyptic sources. The first consists of two fragments of wall-painting in miniature style from the North-West Fresco Heap in the North Wing of the palace at Knossos, which depict triple frames resting above and behind a bull’s horns (Evans, 1928: 724, fig.475).¹⁴⁰ These fragments probably date to LM IA (Hood, 2005: 60). The second source derives from a relief in a corridor north of the Granite Sanctuary in the Temple of Amun at Karnak in Egypt that depicts tribute being offered by Tuthmosis III to Amun-Re, which is discussed by Gill (1969: 85-102). This tribute includes a vessel that is decorated with a bull’s head; above the horns are three curved lines that terminate in small rounded buds. Gill (1969: 88) convincingly interprets these as triple frames, pointing to the lack of extra-Aegean parallels for such an object. She argues that the artists had seen the real Minoan vessel (Gill, 1969: 85); whether this was the case or not, the fact that the relief

¹³⁶ Single frames appear on II.7.178, II.7.199, II.7.201, II.7.202, and II.7.204 (the last four all with clear buds) and the double frames on II.7.182, II.7.183, II.7.184, II.7.185, II.7.189, II.7.190, II.7.203, and II.7.186 (the last one with clear buds).

¹³⁷ The frames appear above the head of a lion and a pig respectively on II.7.199 and II.7.203. They are shown above a horned bull’s head on II.7.183, II.7.184, and II.7.185.

¹³⁸ With bulls on II.7.178 and II.7.182, with lions on II.7.189 and II.7.190, and with pigs on II.7.201, II.7.202, and II.7.204.

¹³⁹ Gill (1969: 91) refers to the creator of these seal-types as a ‘madman’.

¹⁴⁰ Both fragments originally appeared as decoration upon a large-scale dress. Evans (1928: 742; 1930: 40) somewhat implausibly argues that the frames are in fact elephant tusks being transported to Crete by bulls.

approximately corresponds with the Aegean evidence suggests that it is a broadly reliable source.

The association between the frames and animals, independent of a human figure, continued after LM IB. The gold ring I.189 was discovered in a LH II-III A context at Midea and depicts two horned bulls sitting within triple frames. The frames have oval buds on their tips and in their centre are two wide bands decorated with diagonal lines. Underneath the frames is a horizontal line, below which sit two short-horned goats.

One final example of the frames is relevant to the interpretation of the motif of female figures flanked by animals. These are the fragments of frames in stucco relief that were discovered in the East Hall of the palace at Knossos (Evans, 1930: 524, fig.367; Kaiser, 1976: 280-283, pl.49). On the basis of these fragments, Hägg & Lindau (1984: 75) postulate that the motif represents the performance of a real enacted epiphany ritual in which a priestess ‘appeared’ as the goddess beneath frames that were represented upon a wall. A similar suggestion was made regarding the Knossos Throne Room by Reusch (1958: 360-363), who attempted to draw parallels between the motif of female figures flanked by animals and the wall-paintings in this room, which were reconstructed by Evans (1935: 915, fig.895) to show two griffins flanking the throne. Reusch’s theory that an enacted epiphany ritual took place in the Knossos Throne Room is reasonable;¹⁴¹ however, the decoration of this room, and therefore the ritual, cannot be linked with the motif of female figures flanked by animals. Firstly, there are no traces of frames in the Throne Room. Secondly, McCallum (1987: 97-98) emphasises that, aside from the two flanking the inner doorway, the remains of only *one* other griffin have been discovered in the Throne Room, to the right of the throne (Cameron,

¹⁴¹ This theory has received persuasive support from Niemeier (1986: 74-95) and, more recently, from Maran & Stavrianopoulou (2007: 287-292). The evidence in favour of the existence of enacted epiphany rituals is presented in 4.1.2.

1970: 163). There is no evidence that a griffin was depicted to the throne's left (Mirié, 1979: 47-49; McCallum, 1987: 98-100). There is, therefore, very little resemblance between instances of female figures flanked by animals and the scene originally depicted in the Knossos Throne Room.

Turning to the evidence from the East Hall, it is impossible to know how the scene with the 'frames' originally appeared, as Hägg & Lindau (1984: 73) themselves acknowledge. Moreover, the relief is impossible to date (Haysom, 2010: 40 n.6). Crucially, the frames never occur in any scenes of the epiphany-conjuring rituals that include tree-grasping or boulder-touching, or in potential scenes of enacted epiphanies (see 4.1.2). It is therefore unlikely that the frames were connected with epiphany rituals.

The foremost flaw in the theorised connection between the motif of female figures flanked by animals (with or without frames) and enacted epiphany rituals is the chronological discrepancy between the floruit of representations of epiphany rituals and that of the motif under discussion. As was noted above, the first secure attestations of the figures flanked by animals date to LM/LH II. The epiphany rituals, on the other hand, were primarily a phenomenon of Neopalatial glyptic (Niemeier, 1990: 169-170). The rituals and the motif, therefore, were not contemporary, which renders a connection between them highly unlikely.

For these reasons, I follow Gill (1969: 93-94) in disassociating the motif of female figures flanked by animals, and hence the frames, with the performance of an enacted epiphany ritual. The only other complete scenes in which the frames appear (the Zakros sealings) likewise clearly do not depict reality. I therefore dispute the theory of Hägg & Lindau (1984: 70-73) and Marinatos (1984: 120) that the frames were real headdresses that were created using horns specifically removed from animals that had

been sacrificed. This position immediately negates the connection proposed by several scholars between the frames and sacrificial rituals (such as Hägg & Lindau, 1984: 74-75; Marinatos, 1984: 119-122; Morgan, 1995: 137). That the frames were not closely linked with sacrifice is also demonstrated by the fact that the women with frames most frequently appear with non-sacrificial animals, particularly lions and griffins; they only appear with horned animals on II.8.255 and I.379.¹⁴²

I suggest that the frames were primarily an iconographic construct and that the inspiration for the frames, like that for the motif of figures flanked by animals, derived from iconography and not from reality. The principal source of inspiration was the depiction of bulls' horns: Hägg & Lindau (1984: 73) rightly emphasise the close resemblance between the frames and horns, in their shape and in their size relative to the animals and figures with which they are depicted.

That the frames' iconography was inspired by that of horns, particularly those of bulls, is made clear by the damaged cushion II.3.11 from Knossos. The horns of a frontally rendered bull's head are decorated with exactly the same bands that appear on the frames on the Zakros seal-type II.7.184. Crucially, on II.3.11 a double axe appears between the horns, in the same position as those that occur with the frames. There is insufficient space here to explore the roles of the double axe in detail.¹⁴³ Briefly, it has been regarded as a sacrificial implement and symbol, based on its depiction with bulls, as on II.3.11 and additionally on XI.259 and XII.250 (Nilsson, 1950: 231; Dietrich, 1988: 38-39). Its connection with high status has also been emphasised, for example by Rehak (1995a: 111).

The key point to make is that the double axe was clearly an appropriate symbol

¹⁴² See 6.4.2 for a refutation of the theory that lions were sacrificed in the Aegean.

¹⁴³ A short bibliography is provided in 1.4.3.25.

to be depicted between horn-like elements, thus explaining its appearance with the frames.¹⁴⁴ How much remained of its original meaning, whether that was exclusively connected with sacrifice or not, is unclear. The presence of the double axe also emphasises the unrealistic nature of the frames, as it is difficult to imagine such a headdress existing in reality.

It is clear that the frames were associated with bulls from their inception in LM I and that their shape was influenced by that of bulls' horns. They were also associated with other powerful animals such as lions. On this basis, it is possible to theorise that the frames represented the power of the women with which they were depicted over the wild, embodied by the bull (Marinatos, 1984: 122). The double axe could have served a symbolic function, perhaps highlighting the status of the central women, or it may have been included simply because it was an appropriate element to be depicted between bulls' horns.

The frames, therefore, were certainly an appropriate headdress for a deity, as Nilsson (1950: 368) argues. It is probable that the impetus behind the decision to place the frames above the head of the women derived from the Near East, as did the preference for the antithetic arrangement (Marinatos, 1984: 119). Collon (1987: 165) notes that horned headdresses in single and double forms first appeared in Southern Mesopotamia in the second half of the third millennium, from this point on becoming a key attribute of deities. The close relationship between the women with the frames and the divine sphere is supported by the fact that a far higher proportion of the attestations

¹⁴⁴ A parallel development can be witnessed regarding the horns of consecration, the form of which was likewise influenced by the horns of bulls (Evans, 1935: 175; Nilsson, 1950: 365-366). In LM IIIB-C, double axes were often depicted rising from between horns of consecration, as on a fragment of LM IIIC pottery from Karphi (Seiradaki, 1960: 34, fig.24 a2). Moreover, some three-dimensional horns of consecration, such as the examples from the LM IIIB Shrine of the Double Axes, contain socket-holes at their centre into which double axes, or branches, could have been slotted (Evans, 1928: 336; Gesell, 1985: 92).

of this scheme include fantastic flanking creatures, compared to those in which the frames are absent. Accepting that the frames are a divine attribute, it is possible that the fact that they never appear with male figures flanked by animals in glyptic indicates that these figures did not possess the same divine status as the women.

2.3.3 Female Figures without Frames

VI.314, a haematite lentoid attributed to Crete (fig.4), presents a very similar arrangement to the seals already discussed. The woman is accompanied by griffins that appear in exactly the same pose as those on II.3.63, II.3.276, and V.654 above, which indicates that flanking griffins were not restricted to the women with frames. Whereas on these three seals the women raise their hands to the frames, the figure on VI.314 brings both hands to her chest. She is schematically rendered, with a pole-like waist and an aniconic head. Interestingly, there is a band that crosses her neck and then extends out beyond her shoulders, which Nilsson (1950: 358) interprets as short wings. A close parallel appears upon I.159 from Mycenae, which shows a central woman with ‘wings’ flanked by two smaller ‘wing-less’ figures. Similarly, two almost identical seal-types (II.6.22 and II.6.23 from the LM IB deposit at Ayia Triadha) show a single woman with a band crossing her neck and continuing from her shoulders to form ‘wings’. The fact that the band always crosses the necks of the women suggests that they are not wings, as one would expect such wings to emanate from the shoulders or back. Those on I.159 seem to be fastened about the neck in a collar and Goodison (1989: 104) points out that it appears to form part of a costume, the mechanics of which are demonstrated by the cords hanging from the left-hand ‘wing’, which attach to the woman’s girdle. It is not possible to identify the status of these women; it is likely that the winged collar was not

an indication of divinity but simply an item of cult attire.

The next four examples depict women with lions, indicating that they, like griffins, were not the exclusive privilege of women with frames. IV.295 is a damaged serpentine lentoid attributed to Knossos that depicts the woman in a striding pose. The stance of the flanking lions is most unusual: they are vertically couchant as if lying upon the right and left sides of the seal, their heads turning towards the central figure. Nonetheless, the inclusion of IV.295 within this sub-group is supported by Younger (1995: 183) and K. Galanakis (2005: 110). Crowley (1989a: 37) theorises that the engraving by her head may be the remains of frames. The species of flanking animal and the position of the woman's arms would be consistent with this but the seal is too damaged to make the reading certain. Younger (1983: 124) dates this seal to LM I based on its style and the use of serpentine; this dating is accepted in the *CMS* catalogue. If this is correct, IV.295 could potentially be an early and experimental version of a woman with frames, although, without a secure provenance, this cannot be confirmed.

The agate lentoid VI.313, allegedly from Mycenae, bears a strange version of the scene. The lions stand upon their hind-legs and the central figure wears a long, shapeless, undecorated dress instead of a flounced skirt. This is sufficient to raise doubts regarding the figure's gender. Similar undecorated dresses are worn by figures on two other artefacts from Mycenae: a stopper from the House of the Oil Merchant carrying the seal-type I.162, which shows three figures walking in procession, and the gold ring I.128 depicting a seated figure with a griffin.¹⁴⁵ These figures are perhaps all best described as unisex (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 256 n.90). Crucially, the woman on the Tiryns Daemon Ring wears a more elaborate version of the long dress, establishing that

¹⁴⁵ I.128 is discussed in 4.3.1. VII.118, outlined in 4.3.3, depicts a similarly garbed seated figure flanked by lions.

it was worn by female figures. For this reason, I follow Evans (1935: 402) in tentatively reading the figure on VI.313 as a woman. The lack of interaction between the figure and lions is also more consistent with such an identification.

In addition to the unusual dress, the figure on VI.313 wears an unparalleled pointed cap decorated with hatching. Moreover, to the right of the figure's head floats a sacral knot. It is simply rendered with a loop at one end and one diagonal line bisecting its main body, which is decorated with dashes. The closest matches appear upon the lentoids VS.1B.142 from Anthia in Messenia and VS.3.94 from Glyka Nera in Attica, which depict a hybrid creature and two bulls respectively. In both cases the knots are floating symbols that probably serve as fillers. It is likely that the knot on VI.313 fulfils a similar function.

On a further two examples the women touch or restrain the lions. VI.315, an agate amygdaloid, has been attributed to Mycenae.¹⁴⁶ The woman wears billowing trousers decorated with horizontal stripes. No clothing of that exact form is attested elsewhere in glyptic but a woman wearing trousers and carrying cult equipment appears on II.3.8 from Knossos. They are thus suitable attire for cult scenes. The woman's relationship with the lions appears to be affectionate: she raises her hands to their mouths. On the seal-type II.8.254 from Knossos, in contrast, the lions stand upon their hind-legs and are restrained by the woman, who places her hands upon their jaws or tongues. The woman has a naturalistic face and a realistically proportioned body.

Two artefacts depict women with either dolphins or fish. The identification of

¹⁴⁶ The authenticity of this seal has been doubted by Biesantz (1954: 117-118) and Gill (1961: 7). Most of their arguments, such as those regarding the seal's large size and the woman's costume and her naturalistic face, have been successfully countered by Hughes-Brock (2000: 113-114). Still unaccounted for, however, is the fact that the seal is an amygdaloid, a shape never associated with female (or male) figures flanked by animals. The inclusion of the seal in the recent *CMS* catalogue (Volume VI, 2010), on the other hand, speaks greatly in favour of its authenticity so I have included it in my discussion.

the creatures as dolphins is clearest on I.344, a sealing from Pylos. The woman crosses her hands over her chest and she has very wide, square shoulders, her triangular skirt being the only clear indication of her gender.¹⁴⁷ The two dolphins hang vertically to either side of her. A parallel is provided by II.8.258, a seal-type from the palace at Knossos, where a dolphin hangs behind a robed man carrying a hammer-axe. The creatures on VS.1B.116, a lentoid from Aidonia, can also be identified as dolphins; here the woman reaches out to touch, but not grasp, them.

On three examples the female figures clearly grasp the animals in a similar manner to the male figures. Unlike them, however, the women do not hold fantastic or powerful creatures, only birds. On I.233b, a prism from the Vapheio tholos, the woman grasps birds resembling waterfowl by their necks. A very similar scene appears upon IX.154, an unprovenanced chalcedony lentoid: a woman again grasps two waterfowl by their necks. The connection with water is made clear on an unprovenanced jasper lentoid (VII.134). This time, the woman holds the birds by their wings or feet while standing upon waves.

In five scenes, therefore, the women are flanked by creatures related to water, either waterfowl or sea creatures. This reference is perhaps to be expected in areas such as Crete and mainland Greece, where the sea would have played an important role in many lives. It is possible that the female figures' dominance over the waterfowl or sea creatures, which is so clearly illustrated in these scenes, could represent a desired dominance over the sea, these creatures functioning as symbols of water. This is perhaps supported by the fact that, as with the male figures, potentially low status creatures are associated with high status media. I.233b depicting waterfowl is made of

¹⁴⁷ This recalls the similar rendering of I.356, also from Pylos and discussed in 2.2.3.

amethyst and is embellished with gold caps, which protect the string hole from wear (Younger, 1977: 157-158), as is VS.1B.116, illustrating dolphins.

2.3.4 Origins

There are no examples of women flanked by animals that can securely be dated to the Neopalatial Period. However, two artefacts from unclear contexts bearing the motif have been assigned to LM I. The first is the gold diadem reportedly from Kato Zakros that depicts a woman holding two goats by their hind-legs, which Platon (1971: 22-23) dates to LM I. However, none of the examples for which a tentative LM I date has been suggested, such as IV.295 above, depict women grasping the animals, so I prefer to follow Barclay (2001: 378 n.38) in assigning the diadem to a later period, perhaps LM II-III A.

The second potential Minoan precursor is the seal-type II.8.256, which appears on six sealings from the palace at Knossos, some of which derive from LM II-III A contexts (Pini, 2002: 8). The scene is frequently referred to as the ‘Mother of the Mountains’ as it depicts a woman holding a staff standing upon on a rocky prominence. At the base are two antithetic lions that look up at her, while on the right a male figure stands with his hand raised to his head as if saluting. To the left is a horned tiered structure. The woman is almost unanimously interpreted as a goddess that is appearing before a probably mortal figure (Furumark, 1965: 94; Niemeier, 1989: 170; Wedde, 1992: 185; Krattenmaker, 1995b: 56-58).¹⁴⁸ Almost equally unanimous is the dating of the ring that impressed these sealings to LM I (Pini, 1983: 39-45; Niemeier, 1997: 305), although Krattenmaker (1995b: 50) suggests a dating in LM I-II. This scene proves that

¹⁴⁸ See 4.2.1 for a brief discussion of the goddess’ relationship with the man on this seal-type.

the antithetic arrangement was applied to deities, but it does not necessarily follow that all women flanked by animals are goddesses. It is the additional features that designate the figure on this seal-type a deity, particularly her placement upon the mountain and the respectful gesture of the standing figure. The flanking lions should be regarded as subsidiary elements, reinforcing the woman's dominance and divinity.

If the LM I dating is accepted, II.8.256 could provide the clear Neopalatial prototype for the motif of women flanked by animals that was missing for the male version. This does not invalidate the theory that Near Eastern influence was responsible for the adoption of the motif, as I noted above that such influence was clearly already present in the Neopalatial Period.

An additional source of inspiration for the adoption of the motif probably resides in a related Neopalatial Period motif, namely that of seated women with animals, discussed in 4.3 (Hiller, 2001: 297).¹⁴⁹ It should be noted that the seated women usually act affectionately towards the animals and never interact with them in a physically aggressive manner (Marinatos, 1988b: 114). This interaction is also rarely associated with the standing women flanked by animals. The closest link between the Neopalatial motif of seated women with animals and the later antithetic motif appears upon VI.315, on which the standing woman raises her hands to the mouths of her lions in a similar manner to the seated woman on II.6.30 from Ayia Triadha.¹⁵⁰ I am not suggesting that the two motifs were interchangeable. However, it is likely that the Neopalatial motif of seated women with animals helped shape the iconography of the examples of the antithetic motif that depict a peaceful interaction between the women and animals. This occurred in combination with Near Eastern influence, which encouraged the adoption of

¹⁴⁹ There are no known glyptic instances of seated women flanked by animals in the Neopalatial Period.

¹⁵⁰ This Neopalatial seal-type is described in 4.3.4.

the antithetic arrangement.

The close relationship between the examples in which no physical interaction is present and Minoan iconography is additionally indicated by the frames. The above analysis indicated that the frames themselves were of Minoan origin, although the impetus to position them above the women's heads may have derived from the Near East. Crucially, they only appear in scenes in which the women do not touch the animals, which perhaps indicates that the women with frames owe a greater debt to LM I iconography.

In contrast, the few examples in which the women forcibly grasp their animals have no clear precedent in Minoan iconography, as Marinatos (1988b: 114) emphasises.¹⁵¹ It is therefore not surprising that this type of interaction is more commonly depicted on the mainland (Hiller, 2001: 297). It is likely that some representations of women grasping their animals could have been the result of the feminisation of the scenes of male figures grasping animals, which were heavily inspired by the Near East (Hiller, 2001: 297). This could potentially explain why scenes of women grasping animals in the male manner never include frames, which were apparently incompatible with masculine iconography.

Two factors support an interpretation of the women flanked by animals as goddesses. Firstly, whereas the Neopalatial motif that helped form the iconography of the male figures flanked by animals probably depicted both high status mortals and gods, that of seated women with animals was very likely only used to represent

¹⁵¹ One could point to the faience 'Snake Goddess' statuettes from the Knossos Temple Repositories, which date to MM IIIB. However, the fact that snakes never appear in this motif-group emphasises the fact that these artefacts should not be connected with this motif, as Marinatos (1988b: 112) rightly points out.

deities.¹⁵² Secondly, in the Near East, only goddesses were depicted flanked by animals, whereas male figures flanked by animals included mortal heroes. Therefore, as both of these motifs influenced the development of that of the women flanked by animals in the Aegean, it is highly likely that the resulting antithetic motif was similarly restricted to deities.

¹⁵² See Chapter 4.

Table 2: Provenanced Examples of Female Figures Flanked by Animals

No.	II.3.63	V.654	II.3.276	I.144	I.145	XI.112
Date (Context)	LM II-III A1	LH III C1	LM IIIB	LH IIB	LH IIB	Unknown
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II	LM/LH II	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Knossos	Ialyssos, Rhodes	Sphakia	Mycenae	Mycenae	Menidi
Exact Find-Spot	New Hospital site, Tomb III	Makra Vounara, Tomb 20	Tholos	Kalkani cemetery, Tomb 515	Kalkani cemetery, Tomb 515	Tholos
Shape	L	L	L	L	L	L
Material	Agate	Agate	Jasper	Carnelian	Carnelian	Agate
Species of Animal	Griffins	Griffins	Griffins	Lions	Lions	Lions
Form of Frames	Double with DA	Double	Triple	Double with DA	Double with DA	Double/triple
Figure's Contact with Animals	No contact	No contact	No contact	No contact	No contact	No contact

Table 2 Cont.

No.	II.8.255	I.379	II.8.254	I.344	VS.1B.116	I.233b
Date (Context)	None	LH IIIB2	None	LH IIIB2	None	LH IIA
Date (Stylistic)	LM II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM II-III A	LH IIIA2-B	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH I-II A
Find Place	Knossos	Pylos	Knossos	Pylos	Aidonia	Vapheio
Exact Find-Spot	Palace, Wooden Staircase	Palace, South West Building	Palace, Landing on the Grand Staircase	Palace, Wine Magazine, Room 104	Chamber Tomb 8, dromos	Tholos, main chamber
Shape	Fragment (1, L)	Nodules (3, R)	Nodules (2, L)	Nodule (1, L)	L	Prism
Material	(HS?)	(M)	(HS)	(SS)	Carnelian	Amethyst
Species of Animal	Goats	Long-horned goats/bulls & daemons	Lions	Dolphins	Dolphins	Waterfowl
Form of Frames	Triple	Triple	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Level of Figure's Contact with Animals	No contact	No contact	Restraining by placing hands on tongues/jaws	No contact	Touching	Grasping by necks

2.4 Possible Non-Sphragistic Uses of the Motifs

It is now pertinent to address the question of whether seals carrying the motifs of male or female figures flanked by animals could have possessed amuletic properties. There is limited archaeological evidence for the amuletic use of seals depicting the female figure. Wace (1932: 53, 130) describes how I.144 was discovered on the east side of the dromos of Tomb 515 at Mycenae and I.145 on the west side; he views this placement as accidental. Younger (1977: 143-144), however, finds this unlikely and reasonably suggests that the seals had been deliberately placed there in order to protect the entrance of the tomb from intruders, which would explain why the two seals are nearly identical. Similarly, Bloedow (1999: 61; 2001: 6-7) suggests that seals depicting the male figure subduing lions or goats by force (i.e. grasping them) were worn by hunters who hoped the image would aid them in attaining such dominance over those creatures. Laffineur (1992: 106-107) acknowledges the possibility that some seals depicting antithetic arrangements could have acted as apotropaic images and/or have been worn for general protection.

It is relevant in this regard to note that, in the Near East, cylinders depicting deities were believed to possess protective properties (Collon, 1987: 119; 1997: 19) and some depictions of the male and female figures flanked by animals were perhaps worn as apotropaic amulets (Marinatos, 1988b: 51; Barclay, 2001: 378). As the Aegean motifs were to some extent influenced by contact with the Near East, it is reasonable to suggest that some of their amuletic properties were also transferred to the Aegean. This theory does not demand that the central figures be regarded as deities, as it was the notion of control over the wild that was significant, rather than the nature of the figures. Despite the limited nature of the evidence, I find it likely that some seals bearing the

motifs of male or female figures flanked by animals did in some instances possess apotropaic properties.

2.5 Conclusions

The two key issues that have been addressed in this chapter are the meaning of the two motifs and their origins. Regarding the former, it is often not possible to make a statement regarding the nature of the central figure. The man on V.201 and the woman on II.8.256 are clearly deities. The other women may also be goddesses, especially those that appear beneath the frames. Other figures appear to be mortal, such as the men grasping fish (on V.181) or leashed dogs (on II.8.248). However, one should not become preoccupied with attempting to ascertain the nature of the central figures as this is not possible without written texts. Moreover, it is likely that the viewer was not intended to be able to distinguish between high status mortals and deities.

The most important aspect of both motifs was not the nature of the central figure but the iconographic arrangement. The key message was that the creatures were being dominated by the central figure, either by physical force or through some other invisible power. The animals thus function as symbols of the realms over which humans desired dominance, that is, the wild and, in the case of the dolphins and waterfowl, perhaps the sea. Their domination demonstrates the central figure's control over those realms. The power, both physical and perhaps political, that was present in the lion explains why it was frequently depicted as a flanking animal. As the arrangement symbolised control over the wild, it is possible that it was an appropriate image to be worn as a talisman, perhaps by a hunter who desired protection, or by a member of the elite who wished to demonstrate their power to others.

The second key issue addressed in this chapter relates to the motifs' origins. The analysis in this chapter has demonstrated that the creation and evolution of the motif is far more complex than is sometimes realised. Two Neopalatial motifs helped shape the formation of the antithetic motifs. Both of these represented the dominance or mastery of both male and female figures over animals. Male figures, either gods, or, more probably, high status men, were depicted standing alongside peaceful lions, whereas women were depicted as seated and were probably always divine.

LM I glyptic alone was not responsible for the adoption of the motifs: Near Eastern influence provided the impetus for depicting the men and women in the antithetic arrangement with two animals. This foreign influence was combined with the pre-existing LM I motifs of the standing men with lions and the seated women with animals to create the motifs of male or female figures standing between two animals at peace. It appears likely that the latter motif gained in popularity more swiftly than the former, if II.8.256 and IV.295 are indeed to be dated to LM I.

A greater level of foreign influence can be witnessed in the examples in which the animals are forcibly grasped by the central figures, which have no clear precedent in Neopalatial glyptic. The arrangement with female figures again appeared earlier than that with males, being attested in a LH IIA context. The different levels of interaction between the figures and animals, therefore, do not relate to the status of the central figure but to the particular influences that are present within the scene. Of course, it is likely that by LM/LH III these different inspirations had begun to merge, meaning that it is difficult to identify precisely the influence for each artefact. The motifs continued to be shaped by external influences in LM/LH IIIA-B, with Cyprus now providing the inspiration.

CHAPTER 3. ANTITHETIC ANIMAL GROUPS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses three central foci that are flanked by animals in glyptic. These are pillars, plants (usually trees), and altars. The pillar is the central focus of the first sub-group, which has eighteen examples, two of which are sealings. This sub-group has no Minoan precursors. In the second sub-group I examine naturalistic and stylised trees, as well as smaller plants and branches. This sub-group consists of sixteen examples, including two seal-types, and it has two Minoan precursors. An altar of incurved or columnar form is the central focus of the final sub-group, which consists of only five examples, two of which occur upon sealings. It also has two Minoan precursors. More than half of the examples in each sub-group have secure provenances and all but four were discovered on the mainland. Most of the contexts in which the artefacts have been found lie within LH/LM II-III A, which establishes a similar date for the three sub-groups. I make a note of artefacts that have stylistic features suggesting a different date of manufacture.

The principal aim of this chapter is to reach an understanding of the meaning and significance of the three motifs, which appear to have been different in each case. The analysis of the motif of pillars flanked by animals aims to ascertain whether these pillars should be understood as serving as a substitute for a building, specifically a palace. This is achieved by outlining the appearances of pillars in architectural and palatial contexts and then establishing whether these pillars have any features in common with those flanked by animals.

In the second sub-group the central foci take several different forms. For this reason, I do not provide a general overview of trees/plants independently of the antithetic arrangements, or in cult contexts, instead treating each type of plant individually within the section. I aim to provide justification for regarding this as a cohesive motif, despite the differences in central foci, and I assess the theory that plants, particularly trees, were interchangeable with pillars in antithetic arrangements.

Intrinsically linked with ascertaining the significance of the motif of plants flanked by animals is the need to establish its origin, which may have differed subtly from that of the other two motifs. In **2.1.2** I accepted the position of scholars such as Coldstream (1977: 4) and Crowley (1989a: 19-20) that the impetus to arrange scenes antithetically derived from the Near East. Pillars and altars, as they appear in the Aegean, were not depicted flanked by animals in the Near East and both have clear Neopalatial precedents. This indicates that in these cases the Near Eastern antithetic arrangement was used to arrange indigenous iconographic elements (Nilsson, 1950: 255). In contrast, the vegetal central foci do not have such a strong Minoan precedent and trees of different types were commonly illustrated flanked by animals in the contemporary Near East.¹⁵³ This raises the possibility that the motif of plants flanked by animals derived from the Near East, as Crowley (1989a: 67-69, 185) suggests, which is discussed in more detail in **3.3**.

Turning to the altars, I aim to ascertain whether it is reasonable to regard them as the dominant element in the composition. I also propose interpretations of additional iconographic elements that occur in several scenes in this sub-group.

¹⁵³ Examples are provided in **3.3**.

Pillars, trees, and incurved altars all possessed cult significance in the Neopalatial Period. The appearances of pillars and incurved altars in cult contexts, on both Crete and the mainland, are outlined in **3.2.1** and **3.4** respectively. Some of the roles of trees in Neopalatial religious practices are delineated in **4.1.2**. To aid in ascertaining the extent to which these elements retained this significance in the antithetic arrangement, I also highlight the presence of any additional potential indications of cult significance in the attestations of the three motifs.

3.2 Pillars Flanked by Animals

This sub-group consists of eighteen examples, including eight hard stone lentoids, five soft stone lentoids, one lentoid of an unidentifiable stone, two gold rings, and two sealings. Eight have secure provenances: five were excavated in the Argolid, one at Pylos, one in Attica, and one on Crete. A further two artefacts were discovered at now unknown locations on Crete. This sub-group has no secure Minoan precursors. The poses of the flanking animals vary, with some facing the pillar and others turning away from it. The shafts of the pillars are either simply decorated or left plain.

One of the main objectives of this section is to examine the suggestion that the pillars that appear between animals are a substitute for a larger building. Such a possibility is raised by the fact that these pillars usually reach virtually to the top of the iconographic field; there is only one instance in which the pillar is clearly shorter than the flanking animals. The structure to which the pillar refers has been identified as either a cult building (Nilsson, 1950: 155; Cameron, 1975: 75; Niemeier, 1997: 308) or a palace (Furumark, 1965: 94; Mylonas, 1966: 175; Wright, 1994: 58-59). The evidence cited below, **3.2.1** and in **1.5**, clearly indicates that palaces had cult functions, which

means that a distinction between cult buildings and palaces is not always possible or necessary. In order to assess the theory that the pillars flanked by animals are metonyms for a palace, I first outline some relevant instances of structural pillars in palatial and/or cult contexts. Having established some of the features of architectural pillars, in the analysis of the sub-group I highlight similarities between these pillars and those that are flanked by animals. In this analysis, I first discuss the examples with fantastic flanking creatures, followed by those with lions, and, lastly, those with other creatures, which are principally herbivores.

3.2.1 Pillars in Architectural Contexts

Pillars are prominent in monumental palatial architecture, in both the Neopalatial Period on Crete and on the mainland.¹⁵⁴ The clearest example of this appears in the reconstructed Grandstand Fresco from the palace at Knossos, which dates to either LM IA (Immerwahr, 1990: 64) or LM IB (Hood, 2005: 64). Four pillars support the roofs of a tripartite structure. Each compartment is topped with five pairs of horns of consecration and additional pairs are depicted to either side of the bases of the two lower pillars. The two central, higher pillars, in contrast, appear in front of the horns, giving the impression that they are rising from their centre. It is possible that this wall-painting depicts the west façade of the Central Court of the palace at Knossos (Evans, 1928: 806-808; Cameron, 1975: 69-71; Marinatos, 1995: 44-45; German, 2005: 27), potentially indicating that pillars were a prominent feature of palatial architecture in the Neopalatial Period. At the very least, it demonstrates that pillars could be depicted serving a structural role.

¹⁵⁴ I do not attempt to distinguish between pillars and columns as to do so would detract from the argument. The term 'pillar' here includes both load bearing and freestanding shafts and refers to those attested archaeologically and iconographically.

Additionally, a characteristic feature of Neopalatial architecture was the ‘pillar crypt’. These rooms usually had at least one central pillar and often supported a columnar room above, accessed by stairs. At the palace at Knossos, two pillar crypts formed part of the Central Court Sanctuary (Evans, 1928: 816-820). Gesell (1985: 26-29) reasons that many of these pillar crypts served a cult function, indicated by the finds within the rooms. Christakis (2008: 140-141), however, stresses that this interpretation is not always consistent with the evidence; he reasonably argues that the ‘crypts’ may simply have been storage areas.¹⁵⁵

Pillars continued to be associated with the palace in the later LBA. Four pillars surrounded the central hearth in the typical Mycenaean megaron, examples of which remain at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Pylos, demonstrating that pillars were a clearly visible aspect of palatial architecture.

There is also evidence that pillars were linked with cult. A terracotta model of a cult building consisting of three pillars was discovered in the MM IIB Loomweight Basement Deposit in the palace at Knossos (Evans, 1921: 221, fig.166F). These pillars are each topped with two ‘beam-ends’. Evans (1901: 145) suggests that these circular elements represent the ends of crossbeams and so refer to the original architectural form of the pillars. This theory is followed by Mylonas (1957: 27) and Furumark (1965: 94). A clearer example of beam-ends in an undoubtedly structural context appears upon the back of the LM IIIA Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus, where five evenly spaced small circles are illustrated in the entablature of the structure on the right that is topped with horns of consecration (Long, 1974: 66-67, pl.30).

¹⁵⁵ Gesell (1985: 26) states that pillar crypts with cult functions existed in the palaces at Mallia and Phaistos and in the villas at Ayia Triadha and Tylissos. On the other hand, Christakis (2008: 59) reasonably argues that the ‘pillar crypt’ in the latter villa was actually used for storage, stating that the stand and figurine (which had fallen from the upper storey) discovered within are insufficient indicators that the space had a cult function.

Pillars also occur as architectural elements in cult structures in two-dimensional iconography. The lower section of the wall-painting in Room 31 of the Cult Centre at Mycenae depicts a woman holding corn, who is standing to the right of a pillar that appears to support a lintel. Moreover, on the ring I.191 from Midea, a tall pillar supports the leftmost edge of the lintel of a larger building. It is positioned directly below horns of consecration. In **5.2.2** I suggest that this structure may refer to palatial architecture.

These appearances of pillars in architectural contexts can be utilised to ascertain which features associated with pillars are potentially indicative of a structural function. These features include capitals and cornices, which appear in almost all of the instances outlined above; horns of consecration, which occur on the Grandstand Fresco and I.191; and beam-ends, which appear on the model and on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus. The presence of all or some of these features can designate a pillar flanked by animals as potentially serving a structural function, and hence renders it likely that it is a metonym for a larger building. This building can be identified as a palace; however, as I argue below in relation to the motif's geographical distribution, it would be perhaps unnecessarily restrictive to attempt to link the pillar with only one class of structure.

3.2.2 Pillars Flanked by Daemons

The first three examples are all lentoids without secure provenances. The daemons on XII.302 and VIII.65 are clearly empty-handed, lacking their characteristic ewers. The former lentoid is slate but the material from which VIII.65 is made is unclear. On this seal the scaly backs with which daemons are usually depicted have become detached so that they form long crests emanating from the backs of the daemons' heads. With no clear parallels for this type of rendering it is difficult to

ascertain whether this is indicative of a later date of manufacture for VIII.65 compared to the rest of the sub-group.

The pillars on XII.302 and VIII.65 both have double capitals and both rise to the top of the seal-face. In contrast, the pillar on the slate lentoid VI.309 is short, reaching only to the level of the daemons' chests. Pillars of exactly the same height again appear between daemons on two glass plaques from the Tomb of the Genii at Mycenae (Evans, 1901: 117, figs.13, 14). Low pillars are also shown with daemons in non-antithetic arrangements, as on the Tiryns Daemon Ring (in front of the first daemon), on a lentoid from the Nichoria tholos in Messenia (V.440), and on an unprovenanced Cypro-Aegean cylinder (VI.290). None of these artefacts can be dated earlier than LM/LH II. In all of these cases the daemons hold ewers directly above the pillar but the ewers are always upright, indicating that they are not in the act of pouring. Rehak (1995b: 217) reasonably suggests that these low pillars are stands upon which the ewers were to be placed as an offering, illustrating the daemon's sacerdotal role.¹⁵⁶ The pillar on VI.309 is not as slender or ornate as these pillars and the daemons do not appear to be holding ewers, although the engraving on the lentoid is worn.

Interestingly, the daemon on the left on VI.309 is noticeably taller than its companion. A pair of differently sized daemons also appears on the LM I steatite triton shell vessel from Mallia,¹⁵⁷ which illustrates a daemon cupping its paws to catch the liquid being poured from a ewer by its smaller companion. Marinatos (1993: 199) reasonably suggests that this scene refers to a hierarchy of daemons comparable to that of the human world. This is consistent with the daemon's performance of tasks associated with humans elsewhere in iconography. The fact that the only parallel for the

¹⁵⁶ The roles of the daemon are outlined in 1.4.3.3. See 4.3.1, 6.2.3, and 6.3.4 in particular for examples.

¹⁵⁷ Ayios Nikolaos Museum no.11246, analysed by Baurain & Darcque (1983: 3-73). This vessel is also referred to in 5.3.3.

hierarchy of daemons alluded to on VI.309 lies in the Neopalatial Period could suggest that the former is a LM I or LM I-II version of the LM/LH II-III A theme of daemons with low pillars.

3.2.3 Pillars Flanked by Griffins

The lentoid I.98 from Mycenae is the only example in this sub-group that places the pillar atop an incurved altar, which suggests a link with cult.¹⁵⁸ The griffins rest their forelegs upon the altar and turn their heads away from the pillar. Leashes tethering the griffins to the pillar can perhaps be discerned; more will be said regarding this feature below. The pillar has a single grooved and rounded capital, above which is a wide cornice with small dots below that give the impression that the pillar on this seal formed part of a larger structure.

The pillar on the gold ring I.218 from Prosymna is topped with a double capital and the griffins sit upon their haunches. Above the griffins are small ovals that appear to hang from the upper part of the bezel. The placement of similar elements in the upper part of the iconographic field is a well-established convention used to indicate a rocky landscape (Crowley, 2013: 273).¹⁵⁹ However, this scene clearly does not relate to reality; the ovals should be regarded as being purely decorative, like the circles that follow the curve of the seal-face on II.8.326, described in 3.4.2.

The pillar on the lentoid I.171 from Mycenae closely resembles that on I.191, described above, as it is likewise slender and it too appears below horns of consecration. The griffins are clearly leashed to the pillar by a cord tied around their necks. In addition to the possible parallel of I.98 above, a single griffin is depicted tied to a pillar

¹⁵⁸ The parallels with the Lion Gate relief are noted below.

¹⁵⁹ Further examples include the gold rings I.15 and I.16 from Mycenae, and the lentoid I.227 from Vapheio, all of which depict hunting.

on the unprovenanced lentoid XII.301. Leashing also occurs in cult contexts, as on the gold ring V.198, described in **6.2.3**, which depicts a sacrificial bull tied to an altar. Since leashing also occurs with fantastic creatures, it is clear that it does not always designate the animal as a potential sacrificial victim (*contra* Marinatos, 1986: 16). In **2.2.3**, I suggested that the leashes held by the central male figure on II.8.248 emphasise his dominance and control over the dogs with which he appears. I also stressed that dominance over the attendant creatures was a key feature of most if not all instances of male and female figures flanked by animals. It is likely, therefore, that the use of leashes on I.171 emphasises the fact that the animals are subordinate to the pillar. This same dominance of the pillar over the animals may additionally be present in scenes in which tethering is absent.

A further interesting feature of I.171 is the inclusion of an unidentifiable figure floating beneath the griffins' bodies. It has human legs but its head is that of a hybrid and its role in the scene is unclear.¹⁶⁰ It is possible that this creature, like the griffins, should be understood as being dominated by the pillar, which is consistent with its placement in the lower part of the iconographic field.

The final instance of griffins flanking a pillar occurs on the unprovenanced serpentine lentoid VII.187. The pillar has a double capital and the griffins are peculiarly rendered with very narrow heads and few details on their bodies. The wings are clearly delineated, however, and that, combined with the curve of the left-hand creature's neck, is sufficient to allow an identification of these creatures as griffins.

¹⁶⁰ The only possible parallel is VS.1B.3, which depicts a dog in flying gallop below a sacrificial bull lying upon a table. This lentoid is discussed in **6.2.2**.

3.2.4 Pillars Flanked by Lions

Lions are the animals that most frequently flank the pillar, appearing in six scenes. The gold ring VI.364, allegedly from Mycenae (fig.5), depicts the lions as if walking away from the pillar, but they turn their heads to look back towards the centre of the scene. The lions are bound to the pillar by leashes that loop around their necks, which indicate their subordination to the pillar. Of all the pillars in this sub-group, that on VI.364 bears the closest resemblance to those on the Grandstand Fresco as it likewise has a triple capital topped with a cornice. One can thus imagine that the wide cornice on this ring supported the roof of a building.

Two sacral knots hang from the cornice of the pillar. I noted in **1.4.3.5** that these elements most frequently appear floating in mid-air in scenes with animals. Younger (1988: xiii) suggests that the sacral knot is an abbreviated form of a garment. Such garments, perhaps robes or flounced skirts, are frequently depicted being carried in procession in Neopalatial glyptic (Marinatos, 1986: 60; Morgan, 1995: 147).¹⁶¹ The correspondence in shape and decoration between the items on VI.364 and the garment is especially clear on the seal-type VS.3.394 from the LM IA sealing deposit at Akrotiri. The garments would have been presented in a religious ceremony, the nature of which is elaborated upon in **4.2.3**.¹⁶²

Returning to VI.364, Marinatos (1986: 61) suggests that this ring demonstrates that garments were hung from architecture, specifically a cult building, when not being used in rituals. However, the elements on VI.364 more closely match the LM/LH II-III floating symbols than the Neopalatial garments in terms of their small size relative to

¹⁶¹ Instances include the seal-types II.6.11 from Ayia Triadha and II.7.7 from Zakros.

¹⁶² Larger, three-dimensional sacral knots, rendered in faience, were discovered in Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (NM 553-554, 557-564, 569-571). They could originally have been made as votive models of garments, like those from the Temple Repositories at Knossos (Hägg, 1986: 59-60), described in **4.2.3**.

the lions. This, coupled with the ring's alleged provenance in Mycenae, suggests that the ring does not refer to Neopalatial rituals. It is more likely that VI.364 represents a transitional stage in the sacral knot's evolution from a garment used in rituals to a floating symbol, in which it is not yet floating freely.¹⁶³ It is unclear whether the sacral knot retained any of the religious significance possessed by the item from which it derived; this should not be assumed.

The lentoid VS.1B.73 from Mycenae is the only example in the sub-group in which the flanking animals have two markedly different poses. Both lions stand upon their hind-legs with their bodies facing the pillar. However, the lion on the left turns its head away while that on the right looks straight towards the pillar, which has a single capital and a notch slightly further down its shaft. The third example featuring lions is the soft stone lentoid IV.304, which was discovered at an unknown site on Crete. The upper part of the scene has worn away but it is clear that it depicts two lions resting their forepaws upon the sides of a pillar. The lions on VII.154, an agate lentoid attributed to Ialyssos on Rhodes, have a similar pose but they turn their heads away from the pillar. The capital is off-centre and triangular.

The top of the pillar on the agate lentoid VI.365, attributed to Crete, is adorned with five beam-ends. The beam-ends on this seal, and on II.4.203 below, are tightly packed together and so in these instances cannot be regarded as the ends of real beams. The depiction of circles atop pillars probably arose from the original architectural function of the pillar within a larger building. However, in some instances, as on VI.365 and II.4.203, they were simply used as decorative elements, with their original role not being fully understood by the engravers.

¹⁶³ A comparable stage in the sacral knot's development can perhaps be witnessed on the Tiryns Daemon Ring (see 4.3.1).

The final example that depicts lions flanking a pillar is the lapis lacedaemonius lentoid II.3.306, which was discovered at a site in East Crete. The lions sit upon their haunches and face away from the pillar, which has a single capital. A figure-of-eight shield floats below each of the lions' snouts. The two halves of the shields are joined together by a narrow line. Like the sacral knot, the figure-of-eight shield is widely attested as a floating symbol in scenes of animals.¹⁶⁴ In **1.4.3.5**, I referred to the debate regarding the meaning of the figure-of-eight shield. Marinatos (1986: 57) attempts to justify her identification of the shield as a sacrificial symbol by emphasising that it was covered with animal hide; she argues that the shield indicates that the creatures with which it appears are to be sacrificed and their hide perhaps used for the shield. However, I do not recognise the need to associate the shield specifically with sacrifice; the provision of hide for a shield was not necessarily always a cult matter. Moreover, the floating figure-of-eight shield frequently accompanies animals that were not sacrificed, such as lions, as on this seal, and fantastic hybrids.¹⁶⁵

3.2.5 Pillars Flanked by Other Creatures

Four artefacts depict horned herbivores flanking a pillar. The first is a damaged fluorite lentoid from Voula in Attica (VS.3.308), which illustrates two goats standing on all fours, turning their heads away from a pillar with a simple capital. Two pairs of circles appear next to the goats' heads. Those on the left touch to create the impression of a figure-of-eight shield. However, they lack the crosspiece joining the two circles,

¹⁶⁴ In form, the closest parallels for the shields on II.3.306 are those that accompany the herbivores on the unprovenanced lentoid V.184a and the hybrid on VS.3.113 from Khania. Further examples are cited in **1.4.3.21.4.3.5**.

¹⁶⁵ Figure-of-eight shields appear with hybrids on the lentoids I.216 from Prosymna, VS.3.113 from Khania, and the unprovenanced lentoids VI.298, VII.123, IX.128, XI.251, and XII.238. See **6.4** for a refutation of Marinatos' (1986: 13, 42) contention that hunting and sacrifice were equivalent in the LBA Aegean.

which is an indispensable component of the shield. Moreover, a *single* circle of comparable size to the halves of the ‘shields’ appears below the feet of the animal on the left, which suggests that the resemblance between the circles above and the figure-of-eight shield was coincidental. A similar use of circles, presumably as fillers, occurs upon VS.1A.59 (discussed in **6.2.5**), which is also made of a soft material.

The pillar on the sealing I.19 from Mycenae is flanked by horned bulls, above which are two birds with small heads and large bodies. All four of the creatures face the pillar, which is topped with two pairs of horns of consecration, one within the other. Between the horns are five beam-ends. A very close parallel for the doubling of horns of consecration is provided by the gold cut-outs depicting tripartite shrines from Shaft Graves III and IV at Mycenae (NM 353 and 354), where double horns appear atop the highest compartment. The connection between the pillar on I.19 and these cult buildings is emphasised by the fact that each of the three lower compartments houses a pillar. Moreover, the tripartite shrines are also flanked by birds, which appear in an analogous position to those on I.19. Additional instances of birds with architecture include the Neopalatial Zakros Sanctuary Rhyton and I.191, described above, in which they flutter to the right of the pillar.¹⁶⁶ The fact that birds are so frequently associated with buildings that served a cult function in the Neopalatial and later periods strengthens the probability that the pillar on I.19 refers to a larger structure. The beam-ends are evenly spaced and were perhaps included on this sealing as additional markers of the pillar’s architectural nature.

Two rows of beam-ends appear at the top of the pillar flanked by inward-facing horned bulls on the lentoid II.4.203 from the Dictaeon Cave. The penultimate example

¹⁶⁶ Birds were clearly associated with cult structures from at least MM IIB, as birds sit upon two of the pillars in the terracotta model referred to in **3.2.1**.

in this sub-group is XI.196, an agate lentoid of unknown origin (fig.6), which depicts two long-horned goats standing upon their hind-legs with their noses almost touching the edges of the pillar's cornice, which is set atop a double capital. At the top of the pillar's shaft are two small projections that resemble brackets. Two small circles appear in a similar position, just below the capital, on II.3.306 above and XII.288 below. The positioning of the projections on XI.196 and the other two seals correlates exactly with the part of the pillar to which the animals are tethered on I.171, VI.364, and perhaps on I.98. The projections on the pillar on XI.196, therefore, may indicate how the leashes were imagined to be attached to the pillar. If this is the case it is intriguing that the goats themselves are not tied to the pillar on this lentoid.

The identification of the flanking animals on the sealing I.319 from Pylos is uncertain; they could be dogs or lions. Traces of horns of consecration can be discerned at the base of the pillar, paralleling the upper two pillars on the Grandstand Fresco. The sealing was impressed by a lentoid but the hardness of the stone from which it was made cannot be discerned.

The scene upon the unprovenanced agate lentoid XII.288 can be regarded as a variation of this motif as it depicts two symmetrically posed goats with three small floating pillars. One appears centrally between the goats, which are standing upon their hind-legs with their forelegs resting on the edge of the seal-face and their heads turning inwards. The other two pillars appear below the goats' forelegs. They are each topped with three beam-ends, below which are two small projections similar to those on XI.196 above. All three pillars have pointed bases. Small floating pillars also appear upon the Archanes and Mochlos Rings, but they are of a very different form to those on XII.288, having an equally wide base and capital and two small horizontal projections on the

shaft between them.¹⁶⁷ Those on XII.288, however, are more similar to the larger pillars depicted in the rest of the sub-group. It is likely that the pillars on XII.288 are floating symbols comparable to the sacral knot and figure-of-eight shield, which are miniature versions of real items. For this reason, XII.288 is not included in the sub-group proper as it may be an example of the symmetrical arrangement of the theme of animals accompanied by floating elements, examples of which were cited in **1.4.3.21.4.3.5**.¹⁶⁸

3.2.6 Symbolism and Significance

Many of the pillars flanked by animals have features potentially indicative of a structural function, including capitals, cornices, horns of consecration, and beam-ends, although those on VI.365 and II.4.203 are probably just decorative elements. There is only one instance in which none of these features are present, on VI.309; this seal clearly depicts a different type of pillar that was specifically associated with daemons. This analysis supports the theory that the tall pillars flanked by animals serve as metonyms for a larger structure, principally a palace, as Furumark (1965: 94), Wright (1994: 58-59), and others have suggested.

The connection between the motif of pillars flanked by animals and the palace is clearly established by the LH IIIB Lion Gate relief, which is positioned at the entrance to the citadel at Mycenae. Two lions stand with their forelegs resting upon two incurved altars topped with a lintel, from the centre of which rises a pillar. Four beam-ends appear above the pillar, indicating that it serves a structural function (Vermeule, 1972: 215). The relief can be regarded as a monumental and highly visible statement of palatial authority: the pillar, representing the palace, stands upon incurved altars,

¹⁶⁷ These elements are identified as pillars by Sourvinou-Inwood (1973: 154).

¹⁶⁸ An almost identical scene to that on XII.288 appears upon II.3.107 from Kalyvia, with a small figure-of-eight shield appearing between the goats in place of the central floating pillar.

demonstrating that this authority was based upon divine approval (Mylonas, 1966: 175; Vermeule, 1972: 215).¹⁶⁹

The number of similarities between the Lion Gate relief and the glyptic representations of the motif, for example in the arrangement and species of the flanking animals, demonstrates that the relief was based upon the glyptic motif (Vermeule, 1972: 215; Younger, 1984b: 62-64; Laffineur, 1992: 106). Moreover, on I.98 the pillar appears upon an incurved altar, as on the relief. This suggests that they have a shared meaning, the pillars on the glyptic examples likewise demonstrating palatial authority (Laffineur, 1992: 106). I emphasised that in these representations the dominance of the pillar is evident, which is underlined by the employment of leashes in several examples. It is likely that this same dominance over the lions should be inferred from the Lion Gate relief: the pillar's dominance over the lions serves as a metaphor for the dominance of palatial authority over any potential enemies of Mycenae (Bloedow, 1999: 61).

Some scholars, such as Wedde (1995: 500), regard the pillar as interchangeable with and equivalent to anthropomorphic figures flanked by animals, many of which are deities;¹⁷⁰ this view has encouraged the interpretation of pillars as aniconic images of gods (Evans, 1901: 105-106; Persson, 1942b: 42).¹⁷¹ The shared use of antithetic

¹⁶⁹ A more tentative example of the motif of pillars flanked by animals in a palatial context is provided by a fragmentary relief fresco from the fill above the North-South Corridor of the palace at Knossos, which probably dates to MM IIIB (Hood, 2005: 76). Evans (1930: 510-514, fig.355) and Cameron (1975: 75, pl.132) reconstruct a scene of two griffins flanking a pillar, to which they are leashed. Rehak & Younger (1998: 120-121), however, stress that, although the griffins are leashed, there is little evidence to support the contention that they were leashed to the pillar, or that they were even antithetically disposed around it.

¹⁷⁰ Laffineur (1992: 107) suggests that some male figures flanked by animals may be rulers, which was tentatively accepted in **2.2.4**.

¹⁷¹ Similarly, the belief that griffins flanked the thrones in the palaces at Knossos and Pylos in the same manner in which they flank deities on seals has led to theories of divine or semi-divine kingship (Evans, 1935: 920; Lang, 1969: 101). However, in **2.3.2** I accepted the position of Mirié (1979: 47-49) and McCallum (1987: 98-100) that only one griffin was depicted next to the throne in the Knossos Throne Room. Similarly, McCallum (1987: 94, 97-101, pls.IX-X), following Reusch (1958: 338-339) and Mirié

animals such as griffins and lions is insufficient to demonstrate equivalence between the different central foci, however. The fact that the first securely attested antithetic animals in Aegean glyptic flank papyrus, and not a central focus clearly linked to cult, indicates that they are not exclusively associated with the divine realm.¹⁷² Antithetic animals, particularly griffins and lions, were simply an appropriate accompaniment to important central foci, of secular, divine, and symbolic significance; they were employed to amplify the status of the central foci and, in some instances, to relate them to the divine sphere (Marinatos, 1993: 54). Moreover, the analysis in Chapter 2 demonstrated that the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals had their own specific meanings and uses that were very different from those associated with the pillar. There is no sound reason, therefore, to regard the pillar as an aniconic image of a deity.

The pillar flanked by animals thus possesses a different meaning and significance to anthropomorphic figures flanked by animals. Indeed, a pillar is preferable as a symbol of palatial authority to an anthropomorphic representation of a ruler for several reasons. Firstly, whereas the rulers themselves would be transitory, the pillar served as an unchanging and monumental symbol of the idea of palatial authority. Secondly, its architectural functions could be employed to allude to the essential role played in the structure of society by that which it represented (Marinatos, 1993: 98). Finally, the attestations of the motif of pillars flanked by animals are almost entirely restricted to the mainland, with more attestations at Mycenae than any other site, and it is associated with high status media. This suggests that the mainland ruling elite provided the main impetus for the motif's creation: by utilising the pillar, which was already closely linked with both the palace and cult in Minoan thought, the elite would

(1979: 47-49), reasonably reconstructs only a single lion and griffin to the left of the throne in the palace at Pylos, based on the lack of fragments of griffins or lions to the throne's right.

¹⁷² These scenes occur on II.6.102 and X.268, described in 3.3.6. The flanking animals are griffins.

be providing their authority with a veneer of religious approval, while maintaining continuity with previous iconographic traditions (Preziosi & Hitchcock, 1999: 190; Whittaker, 2001: 359). The motif could then have been utilised in order to stress the membership of the artefact's owner to the palatial elite or their close links with palatial authority (Laffineur, 1992: 105-106).

However, the fact that the motif of pillars flanked by animals is attested outside the palatial centres, in locations as diverse as the Dictaeon Cave on Crete and Voula in Attica, in combination with its association with soft stones, indicates that it should not be *exclusively* linked with the mainland palatial elite. It is reasonable to suggest that the pillar, in its role as a metonym for a larger structure, could be employed to allude to not only the palace but also the *oikos* generally (Y. Galanakis, pers. comm., 27 June), thus instantly making it relevant to the wider populace.

Table 3: Provenanced Examples of Pillars Flanked by Animals

No.	I.98	I.218	I.171	VS.1B.73	VS.3.308	I.19	IL.4.203	I.319
Date (Context)	LH II-III	LH II, IIIA2-III B	No context	LH IIIA	LH IIIA2-B1	LH II-III B	MM II-LM III	LH III B2
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH IIIA2-B	LM/LH II-III A	LM II-III A	LH II-III A/B
Find Place	Mycenae	Prosymna	Mycenae	Mycenae	Voula	Mycenae	Dictaeon Cave	Pylos
Exact Find-Spot	Tomb 58	Tomb XLIV	Perseia Area	Asprochoma Tomb 7	Tomb VI, niche burial	Acropolis, Rhyton Well	Lower levels	Palace, North-eastern Building, Room 98
Shape	L	R	L	L	L	<i>Nodus</i> (1, R)	L	Nodule (1, L)
Material	Agate	Gold	Agate	Agate	Fluorite	(M)	Agate	(H/SS)
Species of Animals	Griffins	Griffins	Griffins	Lions	Goats	Bulls & birds	Bulls	Dogs/lions
Animals' Pose	Forelegs on altar, leashed to pillar, heads turned away	Sitting on haunches, looking at pillar	Standing, leashed to pillar, heads turned away	Standing on hind-legs, one facing pillar, one facing away	Standing, heads turned away from pillar	Couchant, facing pillar	Standing, heads turned away from pillar	Forelegs on incurved altar, facing pillar
Pillar's Form	Single capital, wide cornice	Double capital	Single capital, HoC above	Single capital with projection below	Single capital	Topped with double HoC & beam-ends	Nine beam-ends	Rising from HoC, single capital
Additional Elements	Incurved altar	Fillers above	Hybrid below pillar	None	Fillers	None	None	None

3.3 Plants Flanked by Animals

This sub-group has sixteen examples in total and consists of eight lentoids, one cushion, one amygdaloid, and one bezel (all of hard stone), and three gold rings and two seal-types that appear upon sealings. None of the eleven provenanced examples derive from Crete: ten were excavated at four different sites in the Peloponnese and one was discovered at Thebes. There are two Minoan precursors. As in the previous section, the instances with fantastic flanking creatures are discussed first. The remaining examples, most of which depict herbivores, are organised according to the type of central focus. I first discuss the single occurrences of palms and naturalistic trees, followed by trunks topped with trefoil elements and increasingly stylised plants, including ‘fleur-de-lys’ trees.

To be included in this sub-group, the central focus must have a central trunk or shaft that reaches to the lower part of the iconographic field.¹⁷³ Elements that can aid in the identification of central foci as plants or trees include trefoils at the top of the trunk, sprays rising from the base, and tubers, which again sometimes appear at the base. Suggestions of leaves or branches are also diagnostic features of plants. It is possible that some of the central foci are branches or smaller plants. It is rarely possible to identify the species of the plants, with only palms and papyrus plants having clearly identifiable characteristics. It is important to emphasise that the naturalistic, leafy trees that were frequently depicted being grasped by male or female figures in the Neopalatial Period do not feature as central foci.¹⁷⁴

In addition to the different types of central foci, a wide range of flanking animals is attested, which includes goats, bulls, daemons, and even sphinxes. Nonetheless, I

¹⁷³ I therefore exclude VS.1B.16 from Thessaly, which depicts two lions to either side of leafy sprays with no lower shaft.

¹⁷⁴ The uses of these trees are outlined in 4.1.2.

suggest that it is sound to regard this as a cohesive motif. Firstly, many of the central foci are topped with variations of trefoil elements. Secondly, there is a clear pattern within the sub-group in terms of materials and distribution. This motif is restricted to gold rings and hard stone seals and is limited to the mainland, most frequently occurring at or in the vicinity of the palatial centres of Mycenae, Pylos, and Thebes. These correlations suggest that the different central foci are generally interchangeable.

Crowley (1989a: 65-68) regards this motif as being of Near Eastern origin. The arrangement of animals around trees was common in the middle of the second millennium in Mitannian, Middle Assyrian, and Kassite glyptic (Porada, 1948: 66, 139-141; Collon, 1987: 61-62, 66).¹⁷⁵ These instances are thus broadly contemporary with the artefacts under discussion. In order to establish the likelihood of a foreign origin for the motif, I will assess whether it has a clear Minoan precedent.

3.3.1 Plants Flanked by Daemons

The first of the two examples depicting daemons is the lentoid I.231 from Vapheio. The central focus consists of three sprays and rises from horns of consecration, establishing the religious nature of the scene. The attending daemons each raise a ewer above the plant, leading Evans (1901: 100-101) and Crowley (1989a: 67-68) to assume that they are in the act of watering it. However, the plant is placed upon a low platform, indicating that it is not alive and so cannot be being watered.¹⁷⁶ In **5.3.2** and **5.3.3** I note that branches are frequently depicted rising from between horns of

¹⁷⁵ Seven Mitannian Elaborate Style cylinders depicting a stylised tree flanked by herbivores were published by Porada (1948: pl.CLX, nos.1050-1056). A Kassite cylinder shows herbivores flanking a tree (Porada, 1948: pl.LXXXI, no.587), whereas a Middle Assyrian cylinder depicts a stylised tree flanked by lions (Collon, 1987: 72, no.322).

¹⁷⁶ For this reason, Crowley's (1989a: 67-68) contention that I.231 was inspired by scenes of tree-watering rituals in Mesopotamian glyptic can be excluded. Marinatos' (1989: 139) theory that living trees were placed upon low architecture is rejected in **5.3.2**.

consecration in Neopalatial iconography, as well as in later periods. They are frequently rendered in an upright position, as on I.231. The daemons on this seal could perhaps be compared to the male figure on II.3.7, who offers libations to horns of consecration from which rise branches (see 5.3.3). However, Gill (1964: 7) emphasises that ewers were simply attributes of the daemons; moreover, those on I.231 are clearly upright, meaning that this does not necessarily represent a narrative scene of the offering of liquid. I.231 perhaps belongs to the same class as the daemon plaques from Mycenae referred to in 3.2.2, which show daemons holding ewers flanking different central elements in non-narrative scenes. The seal's context indicates that it is contemporary with the earliest appearances of the antithetic arrangement in the Aegean, examples of which are provided below, which is here applied to indigenous elements (Crowley, 1989a: 67).

On the carnelian amygdaloid VI.310, allegedly from Crete, the daemons again hold ewers, which they raise towards a central shaft decorated with short diagonal projections that recall thorns. Two shorter but similarly thorny plants consisting of three sprays stand behind the daemons. As on I.231 above there is no suggestion that the contents of the ewers are being poured onto the tree. The fact that daemons occur only twice in this sub-group, and in both instances with plants that are not attested elsewhere as central foci, could suggest that these scenes have a different meaning to the rest of the sub-group, perhaps being more closely linked with cult.

3.3.2 A Naturalistic Tree Flanked by Animals

The only instance of what could be described as a naturalistic tree occurs upon the lentoid I.123 from Mycenae. It depicts two goats standing upon their hind-legs

looking inwards, their horns crossed. The tree has several branches and grows up from a small container or pot. On the left and right of the seal-face are two-tiered architectural forms that lie just below the animals' hooves but do not support them. They closely resemble the stepped structures associated with seated goddesses and epiphany-conjuring rituals, as outlined in **5.3.5**. The similarity is most apparent on the Neopalatial seal-type VS.1A.176 from Khania, on which a tree rises from the top step. On I.123, however, the tree has become separated from the architecture. This is consistent with the observation made in Chapter 5 that architecture is less frequently depicted in direct association with trees after LM IB.

3.3.3 Palms Flanked by Animals

A palm appears in triple form on the seal-type I.375 from Pylos (fig.7). The flanking animals are short-horned bulls and they have their backs to the palm. Palms appear numerous times in this thesis and in contexts of varying religious significance. To avoid repetition, I discuss these instances together here.

Palms occur many times in secure cult contexts in glyptic, for example with an incurved altar topped with horns of consecration on VS.1A.75 (**5.3.3**) and behind a seated goddess on IS.114 (**4.3.2**).¹⁷⁷ In these instances, it is reasonable to regard the palms as cult markers, reinforcing the religious nature of the scenes (Marinatos, 1989: 142; Hiller, 2011: 105-106). This interpretation can also be applied to the scenes of palms with sacrificial bulls on XI.52 and I.515/II.8.498, discussed in **6.2.2** and **6.2.3**.

Marinatos (1989: 133-134) and Niemeier (1989: 183-184) argue that palms often serve as markers of the epiphany of a deity and so reason that certain figures that

¹⁷⁷ The tree on the latter artefact is identified as a palm by Niemeier (1986: 88).

appear with palms, such as the man on V.608 from Naxos (discussed in **6.2.7**), are gods. However, palms are never depicted being utilised in epiphany-conjuring rituals. Moreover, they never appear in conjunction with hovering figures; they are depicted with deities but not in scenes that can be linked to epiphany-conjuring or enacted epiphany rituals.¹⁷⁸ The fact that palms in glyptic are never depicted in connection with elements unmistakably related to epiphany rituals indicates that they were not markers of epiphanies.

Palms only clearly appear three times in glyptic in LM I and in each instance they are very different from those that appear in LM/LH II-III, as on I.375. That on the seal-type II.7.121 from Zakros is combined with a human head, whereas the palm on the talismanic amygdaloid XII.180 is more naturalistic. The palm on a second seal-type from Zakros (II.7.87) appears with a griffin and is closer to the later examples, but is not stylised in the same manner.¹⁷⁹

In LM/LH II-III glyptic, palms most frequently occur as accompaniments to non-antithetic scenes of animals, usually bulls or goats.¹⁸⁰ Marinatos (1986: 15-18) and Hiller (2011: 106-108) suggest that these palms designate the animals with which they appear as being sacrificial. Nilsson (1950: 285), however, denies that they possess religious significance; indeed, the palms could simply indicate the rural environment in which the scenes are set. Additional evidence against Marinatos' theory is provided by

¹⁷⁸ The theory that the scene on IS.114 depicts an enacted epiphany ritual is appraised in **4.3.2**.

¹⁷⁹ The tree on the LM I amygdaloid VS.1A.55, discussed in **5.3.2**, cannot be securely identified as a palm. Palms were certainly present in Minoan iconography at an early date, featuring on Kamares ware, as on a MM II example from the Loomweight Basement deposit in the palace at Knossos (Evans, 1921: 253-254, fig.190).

¹⁸⁰ Examples include I.52, I.57, I.74, and I.88 from Mycenae, II.8.413 from Knossos, and VS.3.94 from Attica. It appears with the trefoil-topped plant on I.105 from Mycenae and on I.188 from Dendra, and with the figure-of-eight shield on VII.113, attributed to Ialysos.

the sealing VS.1B.353 from Thebes, which depicts lions alongside two palms, indicating that they were not exclusively associated with sacrificial creatures.¹⁸¹

The meaning of the palm, therefore, was dependent upon its context; it can only be regarded as relating to cult in combination with at least one other potential cult marker, such as horns of consecration. Palms are of more use in ascertaining the period in which the seal or ring was manufactured, as palms of the stylised type depicted upon I.375 were restricted to LM/LH II-III glyptic (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 262). The palm on this sealing, therefore, cannot be regarded as indicative of a connection with cult and it demonstrates that the scene was not influenced by Neopalatial glyptic.

3.3.4 Trefoil-Topped Plants Flanked by Animals

A trunk or shaft topped with a clear trefoil forms the central focus on four artefacts: the gold ring I.155 from Mycenae, the lentoid I.266 from Pylos, the damaged sealing VS.1B.354 from Thebes, and the rock crystal bezel XIII.27, allegedly from Mycenae. The flanking animals on the first two examples are horned goats whereas on the latter two artefacts they are horned bulls. On all but I.266 similar plants appear behind the animals' bodies, on I.155 and XIII.27 rising from the centre of the animals' backs. The dashes beneath the goats' feet on I.155 recall grass, from which the plants appear to rise. In contrast, the central foci on I.266 and XIII.27 both have tubers. The plant on VS.1B.354 lacks the tuber, with sprays rising from the base of the trunk instead, and the trefoil is supplemented with a fourth part so that it resembles a leafy cross. A more schematically rendered version of the trefoil element appears between

¹⁸¹ A further instance of a lion associated with a palm occurs upon the fragmentary sealing II.8.551 from Knossos.

two bulls on the lentoid I.92 Mycenae. Here the trunk is reduced to a pole and two branches sprout from near the top to form two arches.

Similar trefoil-topped plants appear many times in LM/LH II-III glyptic in non-antithetic arrangements in conjunction with herbivores,¹⁸² but they cannot be securely identified in any scenes of a religious nature. The fact that these elements occur in very similar contexts to the palms externally of the antithetic animal groups demonstrates that they possessed equivalent meanings as central foci.

3.3.5 Heavily Stylised Plants Flanked by Animals

The central foci on the next four examples cannot be easily categorised. That on the unprovenanced rock crystal lentoid VII.182 resembles a branch topped with a crosspiece and has a tuber at the base. The animals are possibly bovine and are outwardly rampant. The central focus on the agate lentoid VI.446, allegedly from Lato in East Crete, is also schematically rendered. It has a spiky top and a thick trunk that terminates in several small tubers, which hover just above the flanking goats' hind-legs.

On the lentoid I.60 from Mycenae the central focus resembles a pole but the projections that rise at intervals from the shaft indicate that it is a tree or branch. The bodies and forelegs of the flanking lions lie parallel with the trunk but their hind-legs are unnaturally twisted outwards. The central focus on the cushion I.198 from Asine is identifiable as a reduced rendering of a plant on the basis of the sprays that rise from its base. The trunk splits in two halfway up to frame a centrally placed, frontal bull's head. The bodies of two bulls emanate from this head and hang down to either side of the central focus.

¹⁸² Examples include I.76 and I.105 from Mycenae, and I.188 from Midea. In the latter two cases it occurs alongside stylised palms.

On two gold rings from Mycenae (I.58 and I.87, fig.8) the central focus consists of a trunk topped with a stylised trefoil recalling a fleur-de-lys. It resembles a pillar but the presence of tubers at its base, combined with the top's resemblance to a trefoil, suggests that its iconography was inspired by that of plants (Evans, 1901: 155). On I.58 the flanking creatures are hornless and are either young bulls or goats. They wear collars and appear to be leashed to the fleur-de-lys tree in a similar manner to the lions on VI.364.

The fleur-de-lys tree is unattested elsewhere in Aegean glyptic and Evans (1901: 147-152, 155) stresses its foreign origin, noting its Egyptian parallels in addition to its appearances in Cypriot glyptic.¹⁸³ On I.87, the fleur-de-lys tree is flanked by sphinxes wearing plumed caps, which are likewise of foreign origin.¹⁸⁴

The central focus on the final example in this sub-group, the unprovenanced haematite lentoid XIII.39, may also be of foreign origin. It resembles a pole with two diagonal projections emanating from just below the top and it rests upon a pedestal or incurved altar, upon which the flanking griffins place their forelegs. This pole is unparalleled in Aegean glyptic as it is topped with a small female figure wearing a flounced skirt who has double frames in place of a head. Most scholars reasonably interpret this figure as a goddess, either through comparisons with small floating epiphany figures or due to the presence of the frames (Hägg & Lindau, 1984: 70; Marinatos, 1984: 121; Niemeier, 1986: 88; Wedde, 1992: 190).¹⁸⁵ Younger (1983: 122)

¹⁸³ A Cypriot cylinder dating to the latter half of the second millennium illustrates a fleur-de-lys tree flanked by standing figures, which are accompanied by a lion-headed daemon holding an animal by its hind-leg (Collon, 1987: 178, 184, no.875).

¹⁸⁴ The foreign origins of the sphinx are outlined in **1.4.3.31.4.3.3**. Sphinxes sometimes occur in antithetic arrangements on ivory plaques, as on an example from the Menidi tholos depicting two pairs of winged sphinxes flanking a pillar (NM 1972; Poursat, 1977: no.431, pl.XLV).

¹⁸⁵ Small floating figures appear upon the Isopata, Knossos, and Kandia Rings. The female figure on VI.317, described in **2.3.1**, is the closest match to that on XIII.39 as her head is likewise omitted in favour of the frames and she too is flanked by griffins with displayed wings.

dates XIII.39 to LM I on the basis of the similarities in the renderings of the griffins on this seal with those on II.6.102 and X.268 below, which date to LM I. However, the frames are not securely associated with female figures before LM/LH II, which is thus the period to which XIII.39 should be dated (Hägg & Lindau, 1984: 75).¹⁸⁶

Niemeier (1986: 88) identifies the pole on XIII.39 as a palm but the fact that it stands upon a base demonstrates that it is not a living tree. Marinatos (1984: 120) reasonably suggests that it is a standard. Tree-standards were frequently depicted between antithetic animals or human figures in the Near East, especially in Syrian and Mitannian glyptic of the mid-second millennium (Porada, 1948: 141).¹⁸⁷ Crucially, they were sometimes topped with a winged sun-disc, which represented the sun-god (Collon, 1987: 167).¹⁸⁸ It is, therefore, reasonable to suggest that XIII.39 represents an Aegean variation of this theme, with the small figure symbolising the deity in place of the sun-disc. XIII.39 thus provides another instance of the high levels of influence from the contemporary Near East that were present in the iconography of plants flanked by animals.

3.3.6 Minoan Precursors

The motif of plants flanked by animals has two Minoan precursors, which clearly demonstrate that the antithetic arrangement arrived in the Aegean in the Neopalatial Period (Crowley, 1989a: 21).¹⁸⁹ Both depict as the central focus a stylised

¹⁸⁶ The dating of the frames is outlined in 2.3.2.

¹⁸⁷ Syrian examples include those published by Porada (1948: pl.CXLV, nos.955-957).

¹⁸⁸ Three Mitannian cylinders depict a tree-standard or stylised tree topped with a winged-sun-disc and flanked by either griffins or antelopes (Porada, 1948: pl.CLX, nos.1048-1050). The winged sun-disc also appears above either a tree or knotted pillar flanked by standing figures on Syrian cylinders (Porada, 1948: pl.CXLV, no.955; Collon, 1987: 55, nos.216, 219).

¹⁸⁹ An example in wall-painting derives from the Crocus Panel in the House of the Frescoes at Knossos, which dates to MM IIIB/LM IA, in which two goats flank an olive-tree (Cameron, 1975: 180-181). The

papyrus plant, which does not occur in any of the later examples. On the sealing II.6.102 from the LM IB Ayia Triadha deposit, two griffins stand upon their hind-legs and face inwards with their wings displayed.

A very similar scene appears upon the haematite cylinder X.268. The griffins utilise the same pose as those on II.6.102 but their forelegs are supported by a pedestal. Behind them stands a figure in banded robes who holds the ends of two leashes that are tied around the griffins' bodies. The seal was purchased in Beirut but its material and iconography are consistent with a date in LM I (Younger, 1983, 122; 1995: 162). Firstly, despite being a popular material in the Near East (Porada, 1948: 34, 41; Collon, 1987: 102), haematite was used to make seals in the Neopalatial Period (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 12).¹⁹⁰ Secondly, X.268 adds a standing figure and pedestal, but in every other feature it is identical to II.6.102, down to the three round drill marks on the griffins' upper bodies. Moreover, the nearest match to the standing figure is that on I.223 from the Vapheio tholos, who wears almost identical robes and who also restrains a griffin on a leash. Both of these figures should be interpreted as high status mortals (Rehak, 1994: 79-84).

3.3.7 Symbolism and Significance

It is evident that the two Minoan attestations of the motif described above differ greatly from the later examples, in which neither papyrus nor griffins appear (with the exception of XIII.39). Moreover, the naturalistic trees that are closely linked with Minoan religious practices, as outlined in 4.1.2, are never depicted flanked by animals

seal-type II.7.74 from the LM IB deposit at Zakros, described in 5.2.2, provides another illustration of an antithetic animal group in the Neopalatial Period.

¹⁹⁰ Examples of haematite seals dating to LM I include VS.1A.369 (described in 6.3.2) and the amygdaloid II.3.198, depicting a man in banded robes. XIII.39 above provides a slightly later instance of the use of haematite in the Aegean.

in glyptic. Neopalatial influence can only be clearly detected in the scenes on I.123 and I.231. The former utilises a naturalistic tree similar, but not identical, to those attested in cult contexts in Minoan glyptic, and it complements it with the Minoan stepped structure. I.231 employs the Minoan theme of branches between horns of consecration, which is paired with daemons; the only other instance of these flanking animals occurs on VI.310. The Near Eastern influence in these three examples is only evident in the utilisation of the antithetic arrangement. Moreover, I.123 and I.231, and perhaps VI.310, are the only seals in this group that can clearly be linked with cult, through the inclusion of cult architecture on the former two seals. These seals should therefore be separated from the rest of the sub-group.

In the absence of clear Neopalatial precedents, it is probable that Near Eastern influence alone was responsible for the creation of the motif of plants flanked by animals as it appears in the other examples of the sub-group (Crowley, 1989a: 64-68). This position is supported by the presence of clearly non-Aegean central foci on I.58, I.87, and XIII.39; that on I.87 is supplemented with foreign flanking creatures. In these cases, the owners or engravers appear to have chosen to emphasise the foreign nature of the motif, which perhaps suggests that the motifs were intended to function as exotica. Such a theory is consistent with the restriction of the motif to high status media and its close association with palatial centres. That the owner of I.87, or at least his/her kin-group, was concerned with the acquisition of exotica is demonstrated by the fact that a carved ivory tusk from Syro-Palestine, depicting a man flanked by goats, was discovered in the same tomb at Mycenae as this ring (NM 2916; Poursat, 1977: no.301, pl.XXXI; Cline, 2009: 134).

Other central foci, such as palms and the trefoil-topped plants, are those typically depicted with animals in glyptic in the Aegean in LM/LH II-III. The Near Eastern influence is less apparent in these cases, but it is likely that the depiction of these Aegean elements in antithetic animal groups was inspired by the popularity of comparable motifs in the contemporary Near East.

3.3.8 Interchangeability of the Different Central Foci

Several scholars have suggested that trees/plants were interchangeable with and equivalent in meaning to pillars as central foci in antithetic animal groups (Nilsson, 1950: 284; Crowley, 1989a: 68; Wedde, 1995: 500; Hiller, 2001: 297). The preceding analysis has demonstrated, however, that they had different origins and functions. Crucially, the pillar could serve as a symbol of palatial authority. It is difficult to apply this interpretation to the plants, which lack the pillar's monumentality and iconographic pedigree as a palatial symbol. Moreover, although the plants appear with a wide range of flanking creatures, there seems to have been an understanding that lions and griffins were generally not an appropriate accompaniment to plants as central foci. Lions and griffins appear only once each with plants in LM/LH II-IIIA, whereas the former flank pillars at least seven times and the latter four times. Other creatures, such as bulls, appear several times with both pillars and plants. This does not indicate interchangeability between the two elements, however; it simply demonstrates that some iconographic elements were compatible with both central foci.

Table 4: Provenanced Examples of Plants Flanked by Animals

No.	I.231	I.123	I.375	I.155	I.266	VS.1B.354
Date (Context)	LH IIA	LH II-III	LH IIIB2	LH IIIA-B	LH IIIA	LH IIIB2
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH I-II	LM/LH II-III	LM/LH II-III	LM/LH II-III	LM/LH II-III	LH II-III
Find Place	Vapheio	Mycenae	Pylos	Mycenae	Tragana	Thebes
Exact Find-Spot	Tholos, cist	Panagia Hill cemetery, Tomb 88	Palace, South-western Building, outside	Kalkani cemetery, Tomb 520	Tholos 2, shaft 3	New Palace
Shape	L	L	Nodules (3, R)	R	L	Nodule (1, R)
Material	Agate	Agate	(M)	Gold	Jasper	(M)
Species of Animals	Daemons	Goats	Bulls	Goats	Goats	Bulls
Animals' Pose	Standing, facing in, raising ewers	Standing on hind-legs, horns crossed	Lying down, facing in	Standing, facing away	Standing on hind-legs, facing in	Lying down, heads turned away
Type of Plant	Branches	Naturalistic	Triple palm	Trefoil-topped	Trefoil-topped	Trefoil-topped, augmented with fourth part
Additional Elements	HoC, ewers	Stepped structures to left & right	None	Similar plant growing behind goats' backs	None	Similar plant on left

Table 4 Cont.

No.	I.92	I.60	I.198	I.58	I.87
Date (Context)	LH II-III	LH II-III	LH II-III A	LH II-III	LH II-III
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Mycenae	Mycenae	Asine	Mycenae	Mycenae
Exact Find-Spot	Tomb 58	Tomb 25	Tomb I	Tomb 25	Tomb 55
Shape	L	L	Cushion	R	R
Material	Agate	Rock crystal	Hard stone	Gold	Gold
Species of Animals	Bulls	Lions	Bulls	Young bulls/goats	Sphinxes
Animals' Pose	Suspended with legs facing outwards	Suspended with hind-legs facing outwards, forelegs parallel to central focus	Rearing backwards, shared head	Lying down, facing away, wearing collars	Sitting on haunches, facing in
Type of Plant	Arched plant topped with trefoil	Stylised tree/branch	Stylised forked plant	Fleur-de-lys tree	Fleur-de-lys tree
Additional Elements	None	None	None	None	Wisps behind sphinxes' heads

3.4 Altars Flanked by Animals

This sub-group consists of two hard stone lentoids from Mycenae, two unprovenanced hard stone lentoids, and a seal-type from Knossos.¹⁹¹ The altars are of the incurved and columnar forms. Griffins appear once in this sub-group; this example is discussed first, followed by the three instances of lions and the one occurrence of dogs. This sub-group has two Minoan precursors.

Instances of extant incurved altars were referred to in 1.5. In Minoan iconography, in addition to the precursors cited below, an incurved altar appears on the Zakros Sanctuary Rhyton (5.2.52). Incurved altars also appear in later glyptic: they are depicted with single standing figures on II.3.7 and VS.1A.75, discussed in 5.3.3, where they support horns of consecration. Incurved altars are also depicted on I.98 and the Lion Gate relief, described above, where they appear below pillars. Gesell (1985: 33-34, 64) is therefore justified in stating that incurved altars, in LM/LH II-III at least, are actually bases or pedestals for elements of cult significance. In this sub-group, the altars only support the forelegs of the flanking animals, which suggests that, in contrast to the pillar and plant, they are the dominant elements in the scene.

3.4.1 An Altar Flanked by Griffins

The lentoid I.73 from Mycenae (fig.9) depicts two griffins with a shared head resting their forelegs upon a small incurved altar. To the right is a large impaled triangle that is almost the same height as the griffins. I noted in 1.4.3.5 that this element most frequently appears as a small floating symbol in scenes of animals, and that scholars

¹⁹¹ I exclude the fragmentary sealing II.8.327 from Knossos as only the lower left part of the scene remains. An animal resembling a lion or dog places its forelegs upon an incurved altar, from which rises a vertical projection. The forelegs of a second animal can perhaps be discerned on the other side of the altar but a full reconstruction of the scene is not possible.

including Marinatos (1986: 64) have suggested that it designates the animals with which it appears as sacrificial victims. However, the fact that it appears alongside non-sacrificial creatures, such as lions and hybrids, as well as griffins, as on this seal, counts against this.¹⁹² Interestingly, the impaled triangle on I.73 does not float in mid-air, as is typical. Instead, its long vertical bisecting line seems to be set into the ground, as if anchoring it there. Moreover, its size relative to the animals is much greater than is usual.

I remarked in **1.4.3.51.4.3.2** that different theories have been proposed concerning the identity of the object or element to which the impaled triangle relates. The most informative piece of glyptic evidence in this regard is the seal-type II.7.2 from the LM IB Zakros deposit. Here a central male figure, perhaps kneeling on a stool, grasps an object that very closely resembles an impaled triangle. He holds it at the point at which the long shaft, which almost reaches the ground, bisects the triangle. To the right are two males standing with their hands raised to their heads and on the left is a single male, who leans towards the central figure. The central position of the male figure, combined with the gestures targeted at him by the other figures, suggests that he possesses high status. In this scene the impaled triangle is held as if it is a sword, with the bisecting line forming the blade and the triangle its hilt.¹⁹³ Similarly, Marinatos (1986: 62-63) persuasively contends that the impaled triangle depicted hovering above a bull lying upon a table on II.3.338 represents a dagger.¹⁹⁴ It is possible that the larger impaled triangle on I.73 represents a memory of the original sword, which was perhaps

¹⁹² Impaled triangles appear with lions on I.106 from Mycenae and on VS.1B.276b from Armeni, and with hybrids on II.3.67 from Knossos and on XI.251 and XI.336, both of which are unprovenanced.

¹⁹³ The possibility that the triangle itself was the blade is precluded by the inclusion on many examples of a short crosspiece perpendicular to the triangle's tip, as on I.73, in addition to I.106 and II.3.67 cited above.

¹⁹⁴ The reasoning behind this is outlined in **6.2.2**.

a symbol of high status, judging by its appearance on II.7.2. That the impaled triangle on I.73 possesses greater significance than the more commonly attested floating varieties is indicated not only by its larger size but also by its juxtaposition with griffins: there are no other known instances of impaled triangles accompanying this species in glyptic.

3.4.2 Altars Flanked by Lions or Dogs

The next three lentoids depict altars flanked by lions. On I.46 from Mycenae the lions share one head like the griffins on I.73 but no additional iconographic elements are present. The unprovenanced lapis lacedaemonius lentoid XI.176 depicts the lions in the same pose but they have a head each; they look away from each other.¹⁹⁵ A floating bull or goat head appears between them, directly above the incurved altar. I discount Marinatos' (1986: 25) theory that animal heads and bucrania were associated exclusively with sacrifice as lions were not sacrificial animals.¹⁹⁶ Nonetheless, a connection with death is reasonable; the bull/goat head may have been included to allude to the lions' ability as hunters to bring about such an animal's death and thereby heighten the status of the lions.¹⁹⁷ It is likely that XI.176 was manufactured on Crete as lapis lacedaemonius was very rarely used on the mainland (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 237).

The hard stone lentoid XI.47 has likewise been attributed to Crete. The lions rest their forelegs upon a small pillar with a wide base and capital. The fact that it appears in exactly the same position as the incurved altar suggests that it serves an analogous

¹⁹⁵ Two lions are rendered in a similar pose, with their forelegs likewise resting upon an incurved altar, on an ivory plaque discovered on the acropolis at Ialysos and dating to LH IIIA2-B (Marketou, 2008: 278, no.174). The scene is set above architecture reminiscent of that depicted upon the gold cut-outs from Mycenae described in 3.2.5 (Marketou, 2008: 278).

¹⁹⁶ The sacrificial nature of lions is rejected in 6.4.2.

¹⁹⁷ Marinatos (1986: 43-45) suggests that the lions will kill the animal represented by the head but implausibly maintains that they will do so in a sacrificial ritual.

function, *contra* Evans (1901: 161).¹⁹⁸ Very similar elements appear beneath the forelegs of two lions flanking a male figure on XI.257, discussed in 2.2.2, which I labelled as simple pedestals or stands. Above this pedestal/altar is a rayed star-like symbol, which appears in the same position as the bull's head on XI.176 above. Its symbolism is unclear. Small circles are depicted to either side of it that follow the curve of the seal-face. These appear to have been added as decorative elements; the same interpretation can be applied to the star.

A similar but less ornate symbol appears in the same position between two dogs that place their forelegs upon an incurved altar on the seal-type II.8.326 from Knossos (fig.10). Nilsson (1950: 412-415) cites the other instances of solar symbols in glyptic and argues that this points to their role as cult indicators. Many of these occurrences are on gold rings depicting seated women, where they are often interpreted as indicating the deity's presence, for example by Niemeier (1989: 177).¹⁹⁹ However, stars also appear as fillers on seals depicting hybrids and griffins.²⁰⁰ In the absence of a figure who can be identified as a deity, it is probably wiser to regard the symbols on II.8.326 and XI.47 as decorative fillers.

3.4.3 Minoan Precursors and Origins

This sub-group has two secure Minoan precursors, both seal-types from the LM IB deposits. The first is II.6.74 from Ayia Triadha, on which two monkeys face each other with their forelegs placed upon an incurved altar. The lions on II.7.73 from Zakros

¹⁹⁸ Pedestals of this form are attested archaeologically; an example in stone was discovered in a LM IIIB context at the villa at Kannia (Gesell, 1985: 77, 204, fig.137).

¹⁹⁹ These symbols appear with seated women on the Great Goddess Ring and the Tiryns Daemon Ring, in addition to V.199 and XI.28. Their possible meaning is appraised in 4.2.1.

²⁰⁰ VI.299, IX.128, and XI.336 depict stars with hybrids. A griffin appears with a star on XII.301, described in 3.2.3.

also flank an incurved altar but they have an unrealistic pose with their forelegs resting on the ground-line and their hind-legs elevated behind them. On the right a footstool can clearly be seen below the lion's hind-legs. It is relevant to note that other elements of cult architecture were depicted flanked by lions in the Neopalatial Period: the entranceway discussed in **5.2.1** and **5.2.2** is flanked by lions on II.7.74 from Zakros.

The presence of clear Minoan precursors indicates that this motif formed before that of the pillar flanked by animals. It can, therefore, be regarded as a precursor for the latter motif, which also depicts an architectural central focus. The connections between the two are demonstrated by the preference for lions as flanking animals, the presence of the incurved altar on I.98, and the fact that both are attested at Mycenae. The motif of altars flanked by animals, therefore, can be viewed as a Minoan motif that was modified, so that a pillar now appeared in the central position. In its original form, this motif never achieved the popularity of that with the pillar as the central focus, presumably because it did not have the same connotations of palatial authority.

Table 5: Altars Flanked by Animals

No.	I.73	I.46	XI.176	XI.47	II.8.326
Date (Context)	LH II-III	LH II-III	Unknown	Unknown	LM IIIA1
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM II-III A1	LM II-III A1	LM II-III A
Find Place	Mycenae	Mycenae	Crete	Crete	Knossos
Exact Find-Spot	Tomb 42	Aspro-choma cemetery, Tomb 8	Unknown	Unknown	Palace, Wooden Staircase & Secretaries' Bureau
Shape	L	L	L	L	Nodules (19, L)
Material	Agate	Jasper/carnelian	Lapis lacedaemonius	Hard stone	(HS)
Species of Animals	Griffins	Lions	Lions	Lions	Dogs
Animals' Pose	Forelegs on altar, shared head	Forelegs on altar, shared head	Forelegs on altar, facing away	Forelegs on altar, facing away	Forelegs on altar, facing away
Type of Altar	Incurved	Incurved	Incurved	Columnar	Incurved
Additional Symbols	Impaled triangle to right	None	Bull/goat above	Star above	Star & circles above

3.5 Conclusions

The motif of altars flanked by animals is the only one discussed in this chapter with a clear Minoan precedent. The only new feature after LM I is the depiction of the animals with shared heads and the inclusion of additional iconographic elements, some of which may be fillers. The altars of both the incurved and columnar types on the later examples can more accurately be described as pedestals for significant elements, which in this case are the powerful or fantastic flanking creatures. The status of these creatures was further emphasised by the inclusion of elements such as the animal head and large impaled triangle.

The form of the pillar did not change greatly from the Neopalatial Period; it continued to be depicted in conjunction with horns of consecration and beam-ends in LM/LH II-III glyptic. The principal change in the iconography of the pillar that occurred after the Neopalatial Period was its portrayal in antithetic arrangements. This development may have originated on the mainland. The motif of pillars flanked by animals was used as a symbol of palatial authority and some of the seals and rings on which it was depicted were perhaps owned by members of the elite, who wished to stress their links with the palace and thus their own authority. The pillar was well suited to this role as its structural and religious significance was long established. Other instances of the motif can less clearly be linked with the elite; it is possible that the pillar could also refer to the *oikos*, that is, the home in general, the motif perhaps referring to the owner's wish for the continued stability of their household.

The motif of plants or trees flanked by animals has no clear Minoan precedent. This, combined with the fact that it is restricted to the mainland, suggests that it was a mainland creation. It was inspired by the Near East, as were the two attestations of

plants flanked by animals in LM I. Some engravers emphasised the motif's Near Eastern origin by combining it with other foreign elements, whereas in other instances the Near Eastern arrangement was applied to indigenous plants and trees. The motif is restricted to high status media and its suitability as an elite motif may have been dictated by its popularity in the contemporary Near East, which imbued it with prestige. The only scenes that can be connected with cult are those on I.231, I.123, and potentially VI.310; these, like VI.309, depict very different central foci to the rest of the motif-group.

CHAPTER 4. SEATED WOMEN

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Outline of the Motif-Group

This chapter analyses the motifs of a single seated woman accompanied by either standing figures or animals. The first sub-group depicts seated women with one or more standing figures and has ten attestations, including two seal-types attested on sealings. It has eight Minoan precursors. The second sub-group depicts seated women with at least one animal. This sub-group consists of nine examples, including two seal-types attested upon sealings, and three Minoan precursors. Across both sub-groups there are ten securely provenanced examples, six from the mainland and four from Crete. Of these, only six derive from datable contexts and several were clearly heirlooms at the time of their deposition or sphragistic use. Moreover, the scenes discussed here form a less homogenous group compared with those examined in previous chapters. This necessitates a more detailed discussion of their style and iconography in order to arrive at a possible date of manufacture for the artefacts upon which they were engraved.

The first aim of this chapter is to clarify the nature of the relationship between the motif of seated women with standing figures and enacted epiphany rituals. **4.1.2** provides a background to these rituals, as well as to the epiphany-conjuring rituals, and examines the assumption that they were performed in reality. The analysis of the artefacts then assesses whether there are any elements present that potentially support a link between this motif and epiphany rituals. A related objective is to explore the nature of the figures who accompany the seated women. The most reasonable interpretation of the standing female figures is as worshippers or votaries, as Niemeier (1989: 174) states,

but a more complex range of interpretations has been proposed for the male figures, who play a prominent role in the first motif.

My second aim is to outline and account for the diachronic changes that occurred in the iconography of the motif of seated women with animals, on both Crete and on the mainland. The main ways in which these changes are manifested is in the species of the animals with which the women are depicted and in the nature of the interactions between them. In order to arrive at a clearer understanding of these developments I also briefly outline the related motif of standing women with animals.

The seated women discussed here are usually identified as goddesses on the basis of their posture, as I noted in 1.4.4.4. There are several instances of seated women in which an interpretation of them as goddesses is inescapable. These include the Poros Ring, on which a descending woman hovers in a seated position, and the scenes of women seated upon fantastic creatures, as on the seal-type II.6.33 from Ayia Triadha and I.167 from Mycenae. The two former LM I examples firmly demonstrate that a link between seatedness and divinity had been established by the Neopalatial Period. However, scholars including Thomas & Wedde (2001: 6) have suggested that seatedness alone is insufficient to produce a firm identification of a figure as a goddess. I therefore employ this criterion in combination with others, which together are strongly suggestive of divinity. The most relevant criteria here are the reception of offerings, being targeted with gestures by standing figures, having control over fantastic creatures, and being seated upon a cult structure (Wedde, 1992: 195-196).²⁰¹ The analysis of each scene thus includes a justification of the reading of the women as deities, resulting in

²⁰¹ Cult structures can be identified through the presence of horns of consecration.

the clarification of the usefulness of the seatedness criterion.²⁰²

Considering the motif-group as a whole, in thirteen out of nineteen scenes the seated women are positioned on the right side of the field, compared to only two scenes in which they appear on the left.²⁰³ The same preference for placing the seated women in the right part of the field can be detected in the Minoan examples.²⁰⁴ Similarly, in the scenes discussed in Chapter 5, in five examples with multiple figures the architecture is placed on the right, appearing on the left only twice. Sourvinou-Inwood (1989b: 249-250) therefore argues that the right always refers to the divine sphere and the left to the realm of humans, concluding that this iconographic ‘constant’ can be utilised in the interpretative process. However, there are sufficient divergences from this apparent consistency to indicate that this was not the case. In the motif of single figures with architecture, no clear preference for a particular side of the field for the placement of the architecture can be discerned. Moreover, in many scenes of Neopalatial epiphany-conjuring rituals, cult architecture or other cult objects are depicted on both the right and left, as on the Vapheio and Archanes Rings. The placement of certain important iconographic elements, such as seated women, on one particular side of the field does appear to have become standardised to some extent in glyptic.²⁰⁵ However, the fact that some scenes differ only in the positioning of the seated women and in no other aspects (such as V.253 below) indicates that was not a steadfast rule.

²⁰² The potential link between seatedness and divinity did not exist in wall-painting and may have been restricted to glyptic. On the Grandstand Fresco from the palace at Knossos, several seated women are depicted together, their numerousness precluding their interpretation as deities. They are more probably priestesses (Cameron, 1975: 132).

²⁰³ The seated women appear on the left on V.253 and XI.28, and centrally on VI.283, VS.1B.195, VII.118, and on the unpublished Thebes sealings.

²⁰⁴ Nine of the Neopalatial examples depict the women on the right; none show them on the left.

²⁰⁵ Collon (1997: 14) notes that in presentation scenes in the Near East from the end of the third millennium onwards there is a similar preference for placing the seated deity on the right.

4.1.2 Epiphany-Conjuring and Enacted Epiphany Rituals

An enacted epiphany is defined by Hägg (1986: 46-47) as a ritual in which a member of cult staff assumed the role of the goddess and, as such, received adoration and/or offerings. This is distinct from the epiphany-*conjuring* rituals, in which male or female participants touched or grasped a tree or a boulder, or danced (only women), in order to induce the presence of the deity, as Furumark (1965: 91-95) and Warren (1988: 14-32; 1990: 193-206) have shown.²⁰⁶ This presence is indicated by the depiction of a small hovering figure in the upper part of the field, or by other floating epiphanic components, to use Wedde's (1992: 187-189) term, such as large insects.²⁰⁷ These images depict an ecstatic epiphany, in which the deity's presence is felt but is not manifested anthropomorphically (Hägg, 1986: 46, 58).

Many scholars have assumed that these epiphany-conjuring rituals were performed in reality on Crete in the Neopalatial Period, that is, at the time in which their depiction was most common. This is to some extent supported by archaeological finds; Warren (1988: 18) describes several boulders suitable for use in epiphany-conjuring rituals that have been discovered on Crete.²⁰⁸ Moreover, he refers to a circular 'dancing platform' discovered at Knossos where ritual dancing could potentially have taken place (Warren, 1988: 14). These finds, combined with the consistency with which the epiphany-rituals were depicted, renders it likely that they were indeed performed in

²⁰⁶ The most well-known examples of this class are the gold rings from Archanes, Vapheio, Sellopoulo, and Isopata. The latter was discussed most recently by Rehak (2000: 269-276) and Cain (2001: 24-49). To this class can be added the Poros Ring published and analysed by Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis (2000: 39-56). The trees are identified as olive-trees by Cameron (1975: 181).

²⁰⁷ Paired butterflies appear on II.6.4 from Ayia Triadha, above a woman leaning upon a boulder. In a similar scene from Zakros (II.7.6) a dragonfly is depicted next to the woman.

²⁰⁸ Such boulders have been found just outside the palace at Gournia, in the Central Court at Mallia, and before the entrance to the West Sanctuary at Phylakopi (Renfrew, 1985: 44, 102, 368, 390-391, 430-431; Warren, 1988: 18; 1990: 202-205). Additional boulders have been reported near the tholos at Ayia Triadha, which La Rosa (2001: 222-225) reasonably theorises were originally used in funerary practices before being incorporated into epiphany-conjuring rituals in MM II.

reality, and that these performances inspired the glyptic representations.

Turning to the enacted epiphany rituals, Hägg (1986: 47-55) and Niemeier (1986: 63-95) persuasively contend that the architectural arrangement of several Neopalatial buildings is consistent with the preparation of an individual who then appeared in the role of a deity.²⁰⁹ They argue that the creation of the motif of seated women with standing figures was inspired by the performance of such a ritual (Hägg, 1986: 58; Niemeier, 1986: 81; 1990: 167; Marinatos, 1995: 42). Accepting that the depictions of epiphany-conjuring rituals relate to real religious practices, it is possible that some of the contemporary depictions of seated women also depict real practices related to the epiphany.

In order to establish whether an enacted epiphany ritual is potentially being depicted, three criteria are employed. The first is the presence of apparatus associated with epiphany-conjuring rituals, such as particular classes of architecture. The second is the *absence* of elements that remove the scene from reality, such as fantastic creatures, indicating that it was not directly inspired by real rituals. Finally, the date of the artefact upon which the scene is engraved will also be taken into account. Niemeier (1990: 169-170) observes that scenes of epiphany-conjuring rituals were primarily a phenomenon of the Neopalatial Period; there is no evidence that these rituals were performed on the mainland (*contra* Maran & Stavrianopoulou, 2007: 288-292). It is, therefore, possible that later scenes that include allusions to epiphany rituals were inspired by earlier iconographic prototypes and not by real rituals.

²⁰⁹ Reusch (1958: 360-363) proposes that enacted epiphany rituals were performed in the Throne Room of the palace at Knossos, but in 2.3.2 I rejected her suggestion that the motif of female figures flanked by animals represents such a ritual. Niemeier (1986: 63-95) suggests that a priestess was dressed in the Service Section before emerging from the Inner Sanctuary. That the occupant of the throne at Knossos, and perhaps elsewhere on Crete in the Neopalatial Period, was a woman is perhaps suggested by a scene carved upon an ivory mirror-handle from Mycenae that shows a woman sitting upon a chair very similar to the Knossos throne (NM 2399; Poursat, 1977: no.270, pl.24; Niemeier, 1986: 81-82).

4.2 Seated Women with Standing Figures

This group is attested ten times, on two hard stone lentoids, one hard stone amygdaloid, one soft stone lentoid, four gold rings, and on two seal-types.²¹⁰ Of the four securely provenanced examples, two were excavated at Mycenae, one at Pylos, and one at Knossos. The scenes are here organised by the number and gender of the figures with which the seated women appear, starting with single male figures. The scenes in which the women are accompanied by multiple figures are discussed last.

4.2.1 Seated Women with Single Male Figures

The first example is the chlorite lentoid X.261 (fig.11). It is of unknown origin and depicts a woman sitting upon rocks that also form the groundline. Her male companion mirrors her gesture of one arm raised to the breast and the other outstretched so that their hands almost touch. Between the pair are two floating symbols. That on the right is the branch-like element encountered on several rings depicting the epiphany-conjuring rituals involving the boulder, tree, and/or dance, such as on the Sellopoulo Ring, where it appears above the bird.²¹¹ It is unclear what object this item represents but it is likely that it is some form of vegetation,²¹² perhaps included in the scene as a reference to an offering commonly made to the deity (Cain, 2001: 45).

Turning to the symbol on the left, close inspection reveals that it is a small

²¹⁰ I exclude the unprovenanced ring XI.30 depicting a seated woman with one standing woman, which Younger (1988: 146; 1995: 155) labels a 'probable forgery'. I exclude it on three counts. Firstly, the strange orb-like object the seated woman holds is completely unparalleled in glyptic. Secondly, her breasts are clearly depicted in full profile, a rendering *never* utilised in the illustration of seated women in glyptic. Finally, the structure upon which the seated figure perches is a variation of the altar on I.86, but it is topped with an extra pair of horns of consecration. In glyptic, the placement of multiple pairs of horns of consecration upon a structure was used to indicate a large building (see 5.1), which could not possibly have been used as a seat.

²¹¹ On the Vapheio Ring it is depicted above the central woman and on the Isopata Ring it is featured to the left of the upper-most woman. It also occurs on II.3.103 below.

²¹² Younger (1988: 138) identifies it as a cypress branch.

anthropomorphic figure. It is viewed in left profile, like the seated woman, and its legs are stretched out horizontally beneath it. With one hand the figure touches its feet but the other is outstretched. Assuming that the floating figure is linked with the divine sphere, the fact that it employs exactly the same gesture as the seated woman suggests that the two figures are semantically linked and, therefore, that the latter is divine.

The floating figure is ignored by both of the larger figures on X.261, meaning that it cannot be compared to the scenes depicting a small approaching deity that is being greeted by a worshipper, as on II.6.6 from Ayia Triadha.²¹³ In fact, this scene deviates from Neopalatial iconography as it depicts a floating figure without any evidence of the epiphany-conjuring rituals that would have summoned the deity's presence. As Wedde (1992: 197) points out, in the Neopalatial Period, floating symbols only occur in scenes in which either epiphany-conjuring rituals are taking place or in which allusions to them are present. This is demonstrated by two scenes comparable to X.261 that likewise depict seated goddesses in conjunction with small floating figures.

The first scene occurs upon an ivory lid recently discovered at Mochlos in a LM IB context, which depicts a woman seated opposite a line of male and female standing figures, with a small figure in a flounced skirt floating above (Bennet, 2010: 66-67, fig.103). That the seated woman is a goddess is indicated by the fact that she is sitting upon a stepped structure topped with a tree, which I argue in **5.3.5** is an item of cult architecture utilised in epiphany-conjuring rituals. The stepped structure in this scene, therefore, represents the means by which the deity's presence, symbolised by the floating figure, was induced.²¹⁴ I suggest that this scene simultaneously depicts an

²¹³ Additional examples are II.7.1 from Zakros, and the Kandia and Knossos Rings. The floating figure appears on a slightly larger scale on II.3.305 from Kavoussi.

²¹⁴ The stepped structure also appears in conjunction with a small floating figure on II.7.1 from Zakros, which is considered in more detail in **5.3.5**.

ecstatic and enacted epiphany. The seated woman serves as the physical embodiment of the deity, with which the standing figures can interact, whereas the floating figure represents the deity's presence, which is merely *felt*.²¹⁵ The second comparable scene appears upon the Poros Ring, in which a small floating figure appears just above a larger goddess. In this scene the epiphany-conjuring ritual is still in progress as a tree is being grasped by a male figure, who is thereby inducing the deity's presence (Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis, 2000: 44).

On X.261, however, these rituals are entirely absent and no cult architecture is depicted, yet the deity's presence is still indicated, by the floating figure and the branch-like element. This divergence from Neopalatial iconography is sufficient to suggest that this seal was not manufactured in LM I (*contra* Younger, 1983: 124). Nonetheless, the presence of the branch-like element and the floating figure attest to close links with Neopalatial iconography, if not with Neopalatial rituals, suggesting that X.261 should not be dated later than LM II.

Regarding the male figure on X.261, K. Galanakis (2005: 85) argues against the interpretation of male figures that accompany seated women as worshippers because they do not carry offerings. However, the bearing of gifts is not an intrinsic element of a worshipper or votary, or indeed of mortals. In the scenes discussed in Chapter 5 many of the proceeding figures are surely mortal worshippers and they appear both with and without offerings. It is wise, therefore, to regard the man on X.261 as a worshipper of the seated goddess.

The gold ring XI.28, perhaps from Cilia in Thrace, likewise depicts a seated

²¹⁵ A similar interpretation can be proposed for the Ring of Minos: the woman on the left is seated upon the stepped structure, designating her the goddess' physical embodiment. She is accompanied by a small floating figure to her right, which represents the presence of the deity.

woman accompanied by a standing man.²¹⁶ To the right is a structure composed half of ashlar masonry and half of four poles or pillars, the central two of which are topped by a semi-circle. Above, a tree sprouts from the lintel and curves over the head of the standing man. To the left, above the seated woman, is a star. The standing man lifts his right arm horizontally towards the seated woman in a ‘commanding gesture’. This scene has been compared to the LM I Knossos Ring, in which a hovering male figure with the same gesture appears before a woman standing beside a very similar ashlar construction that is again topped with a tree. Marinatos (1989: 133-134) and Niemeier (1989: 171) therefore view the scene on XI.28 as depicting the conclusion of the deity’s descent, and hence the male figure as a god and the woman as the votary. This would also suggest that XI.28 is contemporary with this ring and so dated to LM I, which could additionally be supported by the close correspondence between the architecture depicted on the two rings. However, both the divinity of the man and the Neopalatial date can be challenged.

Regarding the standing man, considering XI.28 in isolation, the only possible indication of his divinity is the commanding gesture. This gesture is utilised by some figures who are certainly deities, such as the aforementioned figure on the Knossos Ring.²¹⁷ It is also employed by figures of more ambiguous status, however, such as the ‘Master’ on VS.1A.142 from Khania and the standing man on V.608 from Naxos, described in 6.2.7.²¹⁸ It is unlikely that all the figures that use the commanding gesture are divine. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that this gesture is associated with high status, both mortal and divine, with the context in which it appears being the most

²¹⁶ Kilyos (also known as Kumköy), near Istanbul in Turkey, is given as XI.28’s provenance in the *CMS* catalogue but its exact find context is unknown. It is possible that the ring was originally acquired in Kilyos as it is incredibly unlikely that such a ring was excavated so far north.

²¹⁷ The floating female figure on the Kandia Ring and the ‘Mother’ on II.8.256 from Knossos, discussed in 2.3.4, also employ this gesture.

²¹⁸ This gesture is also used by the man accompanied by a lion on the seal-type II.8.237 from Knossos, who holds a shaft in his outstretched hand.

important factor in ascertaining its meaning (Hallager, 1985: 31-32; Younger, 1992: 264; Cain, 2001: 4). On XI.28 it is targeted at a seated woman. The gesture appears in the same context on the Poros Ring, on which the central standing man directs his commanding gesture towards a floating seated goddess. The comparison between XI.28 and this ring is more viable than that with the Knossos Ring as neither the male figure on XI.28 nor that on the Poros Ring perform an action incapable of a human. The most probable interpretation of the scene on XI.28, therefore, is that a mortal male, probably of high status, is acknowledging the presence of the seated goddess.

Turning to the possible date of XI.28, while the architecture depicted upon this ring is undeniably similar to that featured on the Knossos Ring, it also recalls that on the LH II-III A ring I.126 from Mycenae. This ring also includes a celestial element, in this instance a crescent, and the curve of the tree closely matches that exhibited by the tree on XI.28.

The diagnostic element in arriving at a date for XI.28 is the star. In Neopalatial glyptic scenes of anthropomorphic figures, stars only occur in association with single standing women of indeterminate status.²¹⁹ These stars are also always pictured in a lower position in the field, near the figures' waist. They are never depicted on rings and they are not included in the repertoire of floating symbols that accompany scenes of epiphany-conjuring rituals. Similar stars appear above seated women on V.199, the Great Goddess Ring, and the Tiryns Daemon Ring, all of which were found on the mainland, though none in datable contexts.

The closest parallels for these stars can be found in Near Eastern glyptic, as Crowley (1989a: 124-125) points out. Cylinders from the late third millennium onwards

²¹⁹ As on II.3.3, II.3.171, and III.351. These lentoids were referred to in **2.3**.

often included stars or other celestial elements in the upper part of the iconographic field, frequently in conjunction with a comparable motif showing the adoration of a seated deity (Porada, 1948: 18, 30; Collon, 1987: 35).²²⁰ Many of these elements referred to specific deities and were included in order to invoke those deities on behalf of the seal's owner (Collon, 1987: 119, 167). There is little doubt that the motif of seated women with standing figures, as depicted in the Aegean, was an indigenous creation as it differs in many important respects to the Near Eastern representations. For example, in the Near East, the seated deity was depicted with attributes and had both divine and mortal attendants, the former often leading the latter in a 'presentation scene' (Porada, 1948: 25; Collon, 1987: 36-37). Nonetheless, the similarities in basic theme between the Aegean and Near Eastern motifs probably facilitated the inclusion of these foreign elements (Aruz, 2000: 7).²²¹ The fact that these stars are not securely attested in glyptic in the Neopalatial Period suggests that they were a later development. An appearance in LM/LH II would make them contemporary with the floruit of the antithetic arrangement, which was likewise imported from the Near East.

In the Aegean, the stars could serve a decorative function, as fillers. Alternatively, in certain contexts, they could mark or emphasise the deity's presence, much like the floating symbols in Neopalatial glyptic (Niemeier, 1989: 177). A connection with the divine sphere is rendered more probable on account of the elements' origins as symbols of specific Near Eastern deities.

The next example is the gold ring V.199, which was discovered on the mainland, perhaps at Thebes. A man raises his left hand to his face and stands opposite a seated woman. A star is depicted in the upper part of the field, which is separated from the rest

²²⁰ Seals depicting a seated deity attended by standing figures with a star above include two Akkadian cylinders published by Porada (1948: pl.XXIX, no.189; pl.XXXIX, no.245).

²²¹ Examples of foreign cylinders in Aegean contexts that depict these elements were provided in 2.1.2.

of the scene by a curved line, which is identical to that on the Great Goddess Ring below. Again, the star can be regarded as indicative of Near Eastern influence (Aruz, 2000: 7-8). The stepped structure upon which the woman sits, in contrast, is very similar to that mentioned above and is additionally attested in numerous scenes from the LM I sealing deposits, such as II.7.8 and VS.1A.177, discussed below. On the seal-type II.8.268 from Knossos, which also dates to LM I, it is topped with horns of consecration, as on V.199. The presence of the Near Eastern star on V.199, however, precludes the interpretation of this scene as a depiction of a real Neopalatial ritual, instead suggesting an approximate date of LH II for its manufacture. The stepped structure nonetheless provides a clear link between the iconography of the epiphany rituals and that of seated women. Turning to the male figure, based on the gesture that he targets at the seated woman, one could interpret him as a mortal worshipper, probably of high status.

A similar scene appears upon the gold ring I.101 from Mycenae. It depicts a standing man holding a long, thin shaft in one hand and touching the hand of a seated woman with the other. The woman would be significantly taller than the man if she were stood up but the difference in height may not have been intended.²²² Several scholars have viewed this scene as a ‘sacred conversation’ or ‘marriage’ between two figures of divine status, due to the manner in which the man touches the woman’s wrist (Marinatos, 1993: 190; Koehl, 2001: 239-240). These features may suggest intimacy to the modern viewer, but this may not have been the intention of the engraver. Moreover, Koehl’s (2001: 289-290) statement that the man is divine by virtue of his anklets and wristlets is flawed as jewellery is an unreliable indication of a figure’s status (Hallager, 1985: 22). The shaft he holds, in contrast, suggests that he is a high status mortal.

²²² Marinatos (1993: 190) argues that the seated figure’s larger size indicates her important role in reproduction. Evans (1930: 464), on the other hand, interprets the pair as mother and son.

A connection between shafts and high status is suggested by two other glyptic examples. A similar shaft (though with a point) is held by the central male figure on the Master Impression from Khania, as noted by Hallager (1985: 23). It also appears on II.8.256 (the ‘Mother of the Mountains’ seal-type) from Knossos; this time it is in the hand of a woman who is apparently passing it to the male figure standing on the right. On this basis, Palaima (1995: 136) interprets the shaft as a symbol of power and authority.²²³ In **2.3.4** I accepted the argument that the woman on II.8.256 is a goddess. The scene may thus depict divine patronage being bestowed upon an important male who represents the ruler or the elite (Marinatos, 1988b: 118-119; Palaima, 1995: 136). The male who holds the shaft on the Master Impression may possess a similar, possibly secular, authority (Palaima, 1995: 136).

Both II.8.256 and the Master Impression probably date to LM I (Hallager, 1985: 11-12),²²⁴ whereas I.101 derives from a LH II-III context, but this lack of potential contemporaneity does not invalidate the comparison made between them. The connection between I.101 and the former seal-type is strengthened by the fact that the rocks that rise up behind the woman on I.101 are comparable to those upon which the goddess on II.8.256 stands. The iconography of I.101, therefore, was clearly influenced by Minoan glyptic.

Moreover, there is evidence that the shaft continued to be connected with divine authority until at least LH IIIB. This is demonstrated by the wall-painting from Room 31 of the Cult Centre at Mycenae, which depicts two women, one holding a sword and the other a shaft comparable to that on I.101 (Rehak, 1992: 49-50). These women are

²²³ Younger (1995: 157-162) provides a catalogue of appearances of the shaft, which often occurs in conjunction with the commanding gesture.

²²⁴ See **2.3.4** for the date of II.8.256.

unanimously interpreted as goddesses.²²⁵ Therefore, the shaft held by the male on I.101 could, like that on II.8.256, allude to the divine patronage of a ruler; the seated goddess may have just passed the shaft to the male. The man does not need to be read as a specific ruler; rather, this scene could be a metaphor for general divine approval of the (possibly male) elite. The links with both Neopalatial and later iconography suggest that I.101 dates to LM/LH I-II.

4.2.2 Seated Women with Single Female Figures or Figures of Unclear Gender

The unprovenanced haematite lentoid VI.284 shows a standing woman raising her left arm to a seated woman. Between the two figures is a pair of horns of consecration, which Hughes-Brock (2000: 118) reasonably regards as a metonym for a cult building. The gesture targeted at the woman, combined with the fact that she is seated, suggests that she is a goddess and the standing woman is a votary. As on several of the Minoan precursors outlined below, the goddess sits upon rocks, which suggests that VI.284 was influenced by LM I glyptic, although there is insufficient diagnostic information present to assign the seal a date of manufacture.

The next example is IX.115, a haematite amygdaloid of unknown origin. The figures' forms lack detail and the standing female figure leans forward, raising her arm over the seated woman's head. Apart from their postures, the two figures are not differentiated as they both wear flounced skirts and are the same size. The scene is flanked by angular leafy plants; those on the right are placed diagonally to serve as the woman's seat. Niemeier (1989: 173-174) argues that the presence of the plants, which he identifies as trees, connects this scene with cult; he interprets the seated woman as a

²²⁵ See the discussions of this wall-painting by Marinatos (1988c: 245-252) and Rehak (1992: 39-62) for references.

goddess. Indeed, the plant behind the seated woman appears in an analogous position to the clearly identifiable trees on the Great Goddess Ring and IS.114, both discussed below. A clearer indicator of the seated woman's divinity is the object resting upon her knee, which K. Galanakis (2005: 108) reasonably interprets as a vessel containing libations that are being offered to her. The offering of vessels or their contents is certainly consistent with the iconography of seated women. It occurs more frequently in the Minoan examples, such as II.6.8 and II.8.268 below, which could suggest that IX.115 should be dated to LM I-II.

The fragmentary sealing II.8.240 from the Little Palace at Knossos depicts a seated woman reaching forward to pick up an unidentifiable item held by a standing figure. Evans (1935: 387) interprets the woman as a goddess and the standing figure as a man, but the gender of this figure is unclear as the left side of the impression has broken away. Crucially, the woman is seated upon a camp-stool, which appears as the goddess' seat on the Tiryns Daemon Ring below. It appears in a similarly supernatural context on the seal-type II.8.262 from Knossos, where its occupant is a seated ape. On the other hand, it appears numerous times in the Knossos Camp-Stool Fresco (Cameron, 1975: fig.21), where the association appears to be with high status and not necessarily with divinity. In the context of receiving offerings, the camp-stool supports the interpretation of the seated woman as a goddess and of the standing figure as a votary. This sealing does not derive from a secure context, but the inclusion of the camp-stool perhaps points to a date in LM II-IIIA, which is broadly contemporary with the Camp-Stool Fresco (Cameron, 1975: 146). As Rehak (1995a: 96-97) notes, camp-stools are primarily associated with the mainland and post-LM IB Crete.

4.2.3 Seated Women with Multiple Figures

The Great Goddess Ring (fig.12) was discovered in the ruins of the Ramp House on the acropolis at Mycenae. It depicts a seated woman holding poppies and being attended by two comparably sized women and one smaller female, probably a girl, who grasps lilies or similar flowers. Behind the seated woman is a tree, which a girl reaches up to touch. In the centre of the scene is a floating double axe and to the left are six lion heads that follow the edge of the bezel. Above are a star and crescent moon, which are separated from the rest of the scene by a curved line.

In the top left of the field is a floating figure holding a figure-of-eight shield. This scene has therefore been interpreted as simultaneously depicting two phases of the epiphany ritual, with the floating figure being interpreted as the approaching deity and the seated woman as the deity, now in its appeared form, being given offerings (Furumark, 1988: 73; Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis, 2000: 53). An allusion to the epiphany-conjuring phase could lie in the actions of the small figure touching the tree. However, the elements, despite being attested in Minoan iconography, appear in a very ‘un-Minoan’ form, as Niemeier (1990: 167) notes. The figure-of-eight shield, which was probably used by the Minoans to summon the deity,²²⁶ was conflated with the small approaching deity to form one figure.²²⁷ Similarly, the double axe simply hovers in the centre of the scene instead of being carried in procession, as in numerous scenes in Neopalatial glyptic (Wedde, 1992: 191).²²⁸

The remaining elements are indicative of a date of LH II or IIIA for the Great

²²⁶ As suggested by the Vapheio Ring, HMS 3668 below, and the seal-type II.7.5 from Zakros, discussed in 5.2.5.

²²⁷ A similar fusion may have occurred on the painted plaque from the Cult Centre at Mycenae (NM 2666), which depicts two women targeting gestures at a figure-of-eight shield that may have limbs and a head. I find this more reasonable than Rehak’s (1999: 227) alternative suggestion that this plaque depicts a Mycenaean ‘warrior goddess’.

²²⁸ Examples include the seal-types II.6.10 from Ayia Triadha, II.7.7 from Zakros, and VS.3.394 from Akrotiri.

Goddess Ring's manufacture. The offering of flowers, for example, is alluded to in numerous scenes engraved upon gold rings of this date that depict women carrying flowers in procession, some of which are discussed in 5.2. This theme is also attested in wall-painting: several women depicted in a procession from the Old Palace at Thebes carry flowers, in addition to other gifts (Reusch, 1956: pl.15).

The crescent and solar symbol that appear in the upper part of the field also point to an approximate LH II date of manufacture for the Great Goddess Ring. The latter resembles a star that is enclosed in a circle, in contrast to that on XI.28 above, which lacks this circle. Nonetheless, it is likely that these celestial symbols too were inspired by Near Eastern glyptic (Crowley, 1989a: 203-204; Aruz, 2000: 7-8). The star and crescent first appeared in the early second millennium in Babylonia, sometimes being depicted together, although in these instances the star was often partially enclosed by the crescent (Porada, 1948: 30; Collon, 1987: 35-37).²²⁹ A further feature that indicates that the symbols on the Great Goddess Ring were derived from the Near East is the fact that they are separated from the rest of the scene by a curved line.²³⁰ An Akkadian cylinder in the collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library depicts an identical curved line enclosing a star above a scene of the seated water god (Porada, 1948: pl.XXX, no.195).

The lion heads on the left of the scene on the Great Goddess Ring are more difficult to explain. Nilsson (1950: 235) theorises that they are the remains of sacrifices deposited at a sacred spot, possibly a holy grove. However, like the double axe, they

²²⁹ The crescent appears on Old Babylonian cylinders with standing male figures (Porada, 1948: pl.LXXV, no.554) and above seated figures approached by standing figures (Porada 1948: pl.L, nos.333-338). It appears juxtaposed with the star on four cylinders of the Isin-Larsa period (Porada, 1948: pl.LVII, nos.395-397, 399).

²³⁰ This curved line is very different from Younger's (1988: 138) 'wavy heaven lines' that sometimes appear in scenes of epiphany-conjuring rituals, as on the Isopata and Poros Rings. These lines do not have the same strongly curved form and never enclose a section of the field like the lines on the Great Goddess Ring and V.199 above.

seem to be floating symbols, rather than real heads. The gold ring I.18, which was discovered with the Great Goddess Ring in the Acropolis Treasure, also depicts disembodied animal heads. Three of them belong to lions; the other three are either bovine or caprine. Gill (1964: 8) interprets the heads as belonging to sacrificial victims. However, such an interpretation is precluded by the fact that lions were not sacrificed in the LBA Aegean, as I demonstrate in 6.4.2. Lion heads sometimes occur alongside other floating elements, such as sacral knots, in scenes of animals, as on the lentoid VS.3.94 from Glyka Nera in Attica. The lion heads on the Great Goddess Ring, therefore, could be viewed as fillers that did not possess any significant meaning. This is consistent with the ring's apparent *horror vacui* (Niemeier, 1990: 167).²³¹ As I noted in 1.4.3.5, the inclusion of floating elements such as sacral knots within a scene is primarily a phenomenon of LM/LH II-III glyptic.

The Great Goddess Ring can thus be recognised as being of LH II date, and as containing a mixture of Minoan, LH II-IIIA, and Near Eastern elements (Hooker, 1983: 140-141; Niemeier, 1990: 167; Wedde, 1992: 190-191; Krzyszkowska, 2005: 255). This does not point to a syncretism of religious beliefs on the mainland, as it is clear that the meanings behind the different Minoan elements were incompletely understood.

The next scene to be discussed is the seal-type I.361 from Pylos. A reading of the scene is hindered by the sealings' damaged state and by the Linear B sign that is inscribed upon one of the sealings *supra sigillum*. A figure in a flounced skirt sits upon a now missing object and faces three standing women, also in flounced skirts. A thin man appears between the first and second standing women. The latter carries a lyre, as Müller et al. (1997: 2) observe. Lyres are unparalleled in glyptic but they do occur in

²³¹ The animal heads on I.18 can be interpreted in the same manner. A parallel for fillers appearing as the main motif is provided by the LM II-IIIA seal-type II.8.127 from Knossos, which depicts three sacral knots flanked by two figure-of-eight shields.

wall-painting. A man playing a lyre was depicted upon the walls of the Throne Room at Pylos (McCallum, 1987: 88-89, pl.X). Moreover, a processional fresco from the LM IIIA deposit at Ayia Triadha depicts a man carrying a lyre walking in front of three other figures, the last of whom plays pipes (Militello, 2006: fig.8). The scene on I.361 could suggest that the target of this procession was likewise a seated woman, probably a goddess.²³² The ring that impressed these sealings must have been produced before the sealings' firing in LH IIIB2; Tamvaki (1985: 282) reasonably dates it to LH II-III A.

The seated woman is positioned centrally on the jasper lentoid VI.283, which is allegedly from Khania. She raises both arms and is flanked by two women who bend towards her. The woman's seat is narrow and resembles a boulder-like pillar, as Warren (1988: 21) observes, but it is possible that it represents the edge of a larger object, the rest of which is obscured by the figure on the right. Warren (1988: 21) argues that the standing women are enrobing the seated woman in preparation for an enacted epiphany ritual in which she will assume the role of the goddess. No garments are clearly visible in the hands of the standing women but the seal is worn and the poses of the three women are consistent with the seated woman being dressed or otherwise prepared. The existence of a ritual involving ceremonial dressing is implied by the glyptic scenes of robes or flounced skirts being carried by figures, sometimes in procession, all of which date to LM I (Cameron, 1975: 144; Marinatos, 1986: 60-61; Morgan, 1995: 147-148).²³³ Garments were also rendered in three dimensions, demonstrated by the faience models of a bell-shaped skirt and a jacket from the Temple Repositories at Knossos (Evans, 1921: 506, fig.364), which Hägg (1986: 59-60) reasonably interprets as votive

²³² There are numerous other processions attested, both in glyptic and in wall-painting, many of which either have their object omitted or lost. It is possible that the object of many of these processions was a seated goddess (Immerwahr, 1990: 114).

²³³ On II.3.8 from Knossos, II.6.11 from Ayia Triadha, II.7.7 from Zakros, and VS.3.394 from Akrotiri.

imitations of real garments.

That the recipient of these garments were women is suggested, firstly, by the nature of the offerings, which could generally only have been worn by women, and, secondly, by the few scenes that may show the ritual in action, including, potentially VI.283. The fragmentary Jewel Fresco from the palace at Knossos depicts a man placing a necklace consisting of gold pendants around the neck of a woman (Cameron, 1975: 679, 683). This wall-painting stylistically dates to MM IIIB/LM IA and so is contemporary with the glyptic scenes depicting the carrying of garments (Cameron, 1975: 145; Immerwahr, 1990: 53). Cameron (1975: 144-145) reasonably suggests that this wall-painting represents a phase in the ceremonial enrobing or adornment of a seated woman.

Two wall-paintings may depict the offering of garments, as opposed to jewellery. The first derives from the Corridor of the Procession in the palace at Knossos (Evans, 1928: 723, fig.450). Boulotis (1987: 150) argues that the vertical dashes that appear by the feet of the central female figure are the tassels of a garment that is being passed to her by two standing male figures. This would certainly be consistent with the wall-painting's theme of the carrying of offerings. Due to the fragmentary nature of the wall-painting, this reconstruction is speculative, but I find it more reasonable than that of Evans (1928: 723, fig.450), in which the dashes are rendered as ribbons flowing from the woman's head. Boulotis (1987: 155) interprets the scene as representing Minoan iconography, even if it was painted in a slightly later period, perhaps LM II, as Hood (2005: 66) suggests. The second wall-painting is from the LM IA House of the Ladies at Akrotiri. Marinatos (1984: fig.69) restores a woman leaning forward in the act of passing a garment to a seated woman. Peterson Murray (2004: 110-113), on the other

hand, restores both women as standing but agrees that a religious ritual involving the presentation of a garment is represented.

There is, therefore, strong evidence that women, both seated and standing, were presented with garments or jewellery by processional figures in the Neopalatial Period. Several scholars have connected this with enacted epiphany rituals, as, if the existence of such rituals is accepted, it is reasonable to assume that some sort of ceremonial preparation of the priestess would have taken place beforehand (Hägg, 1986: 46-47; Marinatos, 1986: 60-61; Warren, 1988: 21). It does not follow, however, that all scenes of the carrying or offering of garments or jewellery were connected with enacted epiphany rituals. The 'Mykenaiia' wall-painting from the South West Building at Mycenae, for example, probably depicts a seated woman receiving a necklace, but derives from a LH IIIB context (Kritseli-Providi, 1982: 110). Late scenes such as this may simply have depicted the carrying or offering of gifts that were bestowed upon a goddess (Immerwahr, 1990: 119), or potentially a high status woman, as they are chronologically far removed from the Neopalatial evidence of epiphany rituals.

Returning to VI.283, due to the lack of clearly rendered garments or jewellery the link with an enacted epiphany ritual must only be tentative, but it does appear as if the seated woman is being prepared in some manner. The ritual preparation of a woman, as opposed to the simple giving of jewellery, may have been limited to the Neopalatial Period, whether it was exclusively connected with epiphany rituals or not. This perhaps suggests a date of LM I or LM I-II for this seal.

4.2.4 Minoan Precursors and Origins

This sub-group has eight Minoan precursors, all but two of which are from the

Neopalatial sealing deposits. Those depicting seated women with single standing figures are discussed first. The lentoid HMS 3668 was discovered at the palatial site of Galatas. Although it was a stray find, the palace and town of Galatas were abandoned in LM I and were not reoccupied (Driessen & Macdonald, 1997: 30), which justifies dating the seal to LM I. The seated woman is accompanied by a standing female who stands upon a low platform and raises one hand to her face. This gesture is identical to that of the man on V.199 above and it probably, in this context, indicates adoration (Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis, 2000: 42-45). Directly behind the woman's head is an arrow and above that several diagonal lines. The woman's seat is not clear; behind her are two circles stacked on top of each other, directly above a step.²³⁴ The arrangement of these circles is strongly reminiscent of a figure-of-eight shield, which on the Vapheio Ring is depicted being leaned upon by a small figure in an epiphany-conjuring ritual (Evans, 1901: 179-180; Warren, 1981: 164; Wedde, 1995: 501). The closest parallel to HMS 3668 is the LM IB seal-type II.7.5 from Zakros, discussed in 5.2.5, which depicts a man and a woman stood before an enclosed figure-of-eight shield. The lines above the shield on HMS 3668 could similarly be part of an enclosure. It may have been used to summon the deity, who the right-hand woman is about to impersonate; her posture suggests that she is in the process of seating herself upon the step.

The second Minoan precursor is the seal-type II.6.8 from Ayia Triadha, which depicts a woman seated upon rocks attended by a small female figure. This figure holds a long vertical object, the base of which rests in the woman's open hand. Cameron (1975: 144) reasonably interprets it as a conical rhyton and thus the seated woman as a goddess receiving libations. II.6.5, also from Ayia Triadha, again shows a woman

²³⁴ I disagree with Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis' (2000: 44) interpretation of this object as a naked dancing figure.

seated upon rocks with a female companion, which firmly establishes that the depiction of rocks as a seat for a female figure originated in the Neopalatial Period (Rehak, 1995a: 105-106). A tree vertically bisects the scene. Comparable scenes appear upon the LM I ring II.3.305 from Kavoussi and the LM IB seal-type II.6.6 from Ayia Triadha, which both depict the epiphany of a goddess, represented by a floating figure, before a standing woman. A tree appears in the centre of the scene on II.3.305 and on the right on II.6.6; they probably allude to the epiphany-conjuring phase of the ritual (Wedde, 1992: 185, 187). The presence of the tree on II.6.5, in addition to the seal-type's close contemporaneity with these scenes, suggests that it also represents the deity's epiphany, this time manifested anthropomorphically (Wedde, 1992: 196). This is supported by the gesture of the seated woman, who raises both her arms as if announcing her appearance (Marinatos, 1989: 135).

The next precursor is the sealing VS.1A.177 from Khania. The seated woman is attended by a significantly smaller figure in a skirt, who holds a long stick. Rehak (2000: 175) is probably correct to read this figure as a child. Three buds appear at the end of the stick, which cannot be identified. The woman sits upon the stepped structure referred to above, which clearly connects VS.1A.177 with the epiphany rituals.²³⁵

VS.1A.179 is likewise from Khania. A seated woman appears in the centre of the scene and is flanked by two figures wearing flounced skirts. The flanking figures are incompletely preserved, as is the central woman's seat. Neither of the standing figures touch the woman so it is not advisable to attempt to link this scene with the ceremonial preparation of a priestess. The seated woman raises one arm and lowers the other. In **5.2.2** I note the suggestion of Wedde (1992: 190) and Marinatos (1993: 185-186) that

²³⁵ The left side of the impression is missing so one can only speculate as to whether the structure was topped with horns of consecration.

this gesture is indicative of dancing and that it is employed in depictions of epiphany-conjuring rituals. I therefore tentatively suggest that the central figure on VS.1A.179 has been dancing in order to induce the deity's presence, which she is now embodying.

The sealing II.7.8 is from the Zakros deposit. It was impressed by a ring probably made of bronze, indicated by the two rivet-marks in the centre of the impression.²³⁶ The scene shows a woman seated upon the stepped structure and accompanied by two women, with that closest lifting an object towards her that can no longer be discerned. Unusually, the second standing figure turns away from the seated woman and her companion. Furumark (1988: 73) theorises that she is dancing, but her pose suggests that she is reaching to an object at the edge of the field; perhaps she is retrieving an offering.

The chief significance of II.7.8 lies in the fact that an almost identical scene appears upon the seal-type II.8.268, which is attested on several sealings dating to the final destruction of the palace at Knossos (Weingarten, 1997: 526 n.29; Younger, 1999: 954). This scene was also engraved upon a bronze ring (indicated by the rivet-marks) but the iconographic field is larger and the seated woman's arms are raised slightly higher than those of the woman on II.7.8 (Pini, 2002: 11, 15 n.15). This indicates that two separate rings were responsible for the impressions. The scene on II.8.268 is better preserved than that on II.7.8 and it reveals that the central standing woman is holding a handled vessel, which she raises towards the seated woman in a libation offering analogous to that on II.6.8 above. II.8.268 also reveals that the stepped structure is topped with horns of consecration, as on V.199 above. Rocks indicating a mountainous environment hang from the top of the iconographic field, suggesting that the rituals

²³⁶ See 1.3.3 regarding the detection of bronze rings that have impressed sealings.

involving the stepped structure could be performed outside (Marinatos, 1993: 161).²³⁷

The very close correspondence between the scenes on II.7.8 and II.8.268 suggests that the two original rings were contemporary (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 189). It is likely that both were engraved at Knossos, the single flat-based nodule bearing II.7.8 having been sent to Zakros from Knossos (Weingarten, 1997: 526-527).²³⁸ The two nearly identical rings could have been created because a junior official required a copy (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 192) or because the motif was simply part of the engraver's repertoire (Pini, 2002: 15). To explain how a ring bearing a LM I motif survived to impress significantly later sealings, Weingarten (1997: 527) speculates that either a descendant of its original owner (who also became an administrator) inherited the ring, or that it was taken and used by someone who later worked in the palace at Knossos.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that II.8.268 also appears upon what Evans (1928: 767) termed a 'clay matrix' (HMs 283), which bears an impression of the impression of the original ring, i.e., it is not in relief.²³⁹ Weingarten (1997: 527) argues that the 'matrix' was used to make replica rings for officials of the same class. However, Pini (2002: 13) states that this would not have been possible, due to the incomplete nature of the impression on HMs 283. It is more likely that HMs 283 was actually a *nodulus*, as it has the same curved back as sealings of this form (Müller, 2002: 77). Müller (2002: 82-83) and Krzyszkowska (2005: 222) suggest that the original ring was not to hand when it was required, so, in its absence, a *sealing* was used to make an impression in the clay, explaining why the impression on HMs 283 is not in relief.

²³⁷ This convention was referred to in 3.2.3 in relation to I.218.

²³⁸ There are several instances of impressions discovered at different sites that were made by the same ring, such as the identical scenes of bull-leaping from Ayia Triadha (II.6.43), Gournia (II.6.161), Sklavokambos (II.6.259), and Zakros (II.7.39). Moreover, the same battle scene is attested at both Ayia Triadha (II.6.15) and Knossos (II.8.279).

²³⁹ The sealings II.8.362 and II.8.400, also from Knossos, are likewise impressions of impressions, as Pini (2002: 13) points out.

Müller (2002: 82-83) states that practical tests indicate that a naturally dried sealing, as opposed to one that was deliberately fired, could indeed have been used to impress a soft piece of clay. This is, therefore, the most reasonable theory offered thus far to explain the existence of HMs 283.

II.7.8 and II.8.268 are significant as they provide clear evidence of the continuity of a specific scene from LM I to later periods. The continued use of older rings demonstrates one of the ways in which Minoan iconography was transmitted beyond LM IB.²⁴⁰

The final Minoan precursor is the Mochlos Ring. It does not depict a seated woman with standing figures or animals but it is included as it reinforces the connection between seated women and epiphany rituals. The woman is sitting in a boat and she raises her right arm towards architecture on the left side of the field. On the right is the stepped structure, which is here topped with a tree instead of horns of consecration. Above the boat are two 'squills', a small pillar, and perhaps also a 'seed'. The former are associated with epiphany-conjuring rituals (see 5.3.5), as is the 'seed', which features as a floating element on the Vapheio Ring.²⁴¹ The Mochlos Ring, therefore, emphasises the connection between epiphany-conjuring rituals and seated women. It may depict the imagined result of these rituals, that is, the appearance of a goddess in a boat, which is animal-shaped and so serves to remove the scene from reality (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1989a: 99).²⁴²

Several of the Minoan precursors can be connected with epiphany rituals. Such a connection is evidenced on HMS 3668 and II.6.5 in the inclusion of an item used to

²⁴⁰ Another artefact that probably survived from LM I into later periods is the metal ring upon which the 'Mother of the Mountains' seal-type (II.8.256) appears.

²⁴¹ The 'seed' is examined in more detail below.

²⁴² A very similar boat appears upon the Ring of Minos, again in a scene that is clearly set apart from reality.

summon the deity, respectively the figure-of-eight shield and tree. On VS.1A.177, II.7.8, and II.8.268 the stepped structure attests to this link, as it does in combination with other elements on the Mochlos Ring, although this scene is clearly set in the divine sphere. On II.6.8 and VS.1A.179 the link with enacted epiphany or epiphany-conjuring rituals is more tenuous; it is advisable to identify the women simply as goddesses rather than as priestesses playing the role of goddesses.

Turning to the later attestations of the motif, they include fewer elements relating to epiphany rituals. The floating symbols on X.268 and the stepped structure on V.199 are indicative of the influence of the iconography employed to depict such rituals in the Neopalatial Period, rather than of the continued performance of the rituals themselves. The placement of the seated woman near rocks on I.101, the offering of libations on IX.115, and various elements of the Great Goddess Ring are also indicative of the debt owed to Neopalatial iconography. Many of these later artefacts also contain new elements such as stars, which indicate the presence of Near Eastern influence, in addition to the Minoan. I.361 fuses the motif of seated women with the popular LM/LH II-III A theme of the procession, which is examined in more detail in 5.2. Moreover, the seated women now started to be frequently accompanied by single male figures. All these seated women should simply be identified as goddesses, rather than epiphanies. Some of these scenes could have related to real rituals in which a seated woman was given an offering, which is a theme that also appears in wall-painting. Other scenes, however, could be iconographic shorthand for the close relationship between the divine and human/sacerdotal worlds, represented by the seated women and standing figures respectively (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1989b: 249).

Table 6: Provenanced Examples of Seated Women with Standing Figures

No.	I.101	II.8.240	Great Goddess Ring	I.361
Date (Context)	LH II-III	LM	Unknown	LH IIIB2
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH I-II	LM II-III A	LH II	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Mycenae	Knossos	Mycenae	Pylos
Exact Find-Spot	Tomb 66	Little Palace, under the door of North-South Room West of the Shrine	Ramp House, Acropolis Treasure	Palace, Wine Magazine, Room 105
Shape	R	Nodule (L?)	R	Nodules (2, R)
Material	Gold	(Unclear)	Gold	(M)
Number & Gender of Standing Figures	One male figure	One female figure	Two large female figures, two small female figures	Three female figures & one male figure
Items Carried/Held	Long shaft held by standing figure	Unidentifiable object held by standing figure	Flowers held by the seated woman & three standing figures	One female figure carries a lyre
Woman's Seat	Low arch	Camp-stool	Rocks	Missing
Additional Elements	Rocks behind seat	None	Crescent, star, curved line, & floating figure above, animal heads to left, double axe in centre, tree to right	None

4.3 Seated Women with Animals

The second sub-group consists of five rings, one hard stone lentoid, one lentoid of unknown material, and two seal-types.²⁴³ Of these, three were discovered at different sites on the mainland, another three were excavated on Crete, and the remainder are of unknown origin. This motif has three Minoan precursors, all from the LM I sealing deposits. The seated women appear with a single animal on five examples, on one of which it is paired with a standing woman. The instances with fantastic creatures are discussed first, followed by those with terrestrial animals. The three scenes in which the seated women are flanked by animals are considered last.

4.3.1 Seated Women with Fantastic Creatures

The first artefact to be discussed is the Tiryns Daemon Ring, which depicts four daemons facing a seated woman holding a cup. The woman is certainly a goddess, as her attendance by daemons indicates. This scene contains a number of interesting iconographic elements, an analysis of which can aid in arriving at a date of manufacture for this ring. This is especially important as it derives from the ‘Tiryns Treasure’, an unstratified complex of items of Early Mycenaean to LH IIIC date, discovered in a pit in the south-eastern part of the Lower Town (Maran, 2006: 129-133).²⁴⁴ In the absence of a datable context, the iconographic analysis provides the only means by which this unique ring can be dated.

Many of the elements are present in Neopalatial iconography, such as daemons

²⁴³ The fragmentary sealing II.8.261 from Knossos shows the forepart of one horned goat, the chin of another, and a human hand reaching towards them. The original design could have shown a scene of a seated figure attended by more than one animal. As very little of the figure remains, however, the sealing must be excluded.

²⁴⁴ Maran (2006: 129-141) provides a detailed account of the circumstances of the Treasure’s discovery and excavation and additionally examines its composition and significance.

carrying ewers. Moreover, Rehak (1995a: 108; 1995b: 225) points out that the cup held by the goddess very closely resembles two alabaster vessels from Shaft Graves IV and V at Mycenae (NM 689 and 600), in addition to others discovered in LM IB contexts at the Zakros palace (Warren, 1969: 36-37). Moreover, below the scene is a dado consisting of a half-rosette frieze. The same element appears below the two central pillars in the structure depicted in the Neopalatial Grandstand Fresco from Knossos, which is described in more detail in **3.2.1**. However, a very similar frieze is illustrated below the griffin on the gold cushion I.293 from Tholos IV at Pylos, as Rehak (1995a: 107) notes, which dates to LH II.

The remaining iconographic elements likewise point to a date of LH II for the Tiryns Daemon Ring's manufacture, which is the date assigned to it by Rehak (1995a: 107-108). Below the ewer of the right-most daemon is a low pillar, which was first encountered in **3.2.2**, where I accepted Rehak's (1995b: 217) suggestion that it is an offering stand and argued that it first appeared in LH II. Tall, narrow plants or branches appear in front of the remaining three daemons in comparable positions to the low pillar. Four identical branches float above the scene. They are different in detail to the floating branch-like element described above in relation to X.261 that appears in scenes connected with epiphany rituals. Crowley (1989a: 60) points out that the branches are very similar to the foliate elements that appear upon the MM IIB seal-type II.5.322 from Phaistos, again in association with a daemon carrying a ewer. However, identical elements also appear in later glyptic on the mainland, as on the gold ring I.127 from Mycenae (discussed in **5.2.4**), where they flank a cult building.

The seated woman on the Tiryns Daemon Ring sits upon a camp-stool that closely resembles those on the Camp-Stool Fresco, which I noted above dates to LM II-

IIIA; it even has the same tassel hanging from the point at which the legs cross. The only difference is that it has a back, like the seat of the figure on I.128 below. A bird, possibly a hawk, perches behind the seated woman. The bird clutches a sacral knot in its talons. In its positioning relative to the seated woman it is analogous to the sacral knot that is illustrated behind the neck of the La Parisienne figure from the Camp-Stool Fresco (Rehak, 1995a: 107-108). Whereas on the fresco it is clearly part of the woman's outfit, that on the Tiryns Daemon Ring has been separated from the woman, although it is not yet floating freely, as it more commonly does in LM/LH II-III glyptic.²⁴⁵

Turning to the woman's dress, its closest parallel is worn by the female figure on the left in the LH IIIB wall-painting from Room 31 of the Cult Centre at Mycenae, as Rehak (1992: 47) points out. This dress is a clear mainland contribution to the iconographic repertoire and indicates a move away from the trend of depicting most women in flounced skirts (Cameron, 1975: 138).

The final elements of the Tiryns Daemon Ring to be discussed appear in the upper section of the scene, which is separated from the events below by a wavy line. Floating in this section are a crescent and a circle with spokes, in addition to the branch-like elements. These former two elements are almost identical to those on the Great Goddess Ring and can likewise be attributed to Near Eastern influence (Crowley, 1989a: 203-204; Aruz, 2000: 7-8).

Overall, the evidence supports Rehak's (1995a: 107-108) dating of this ring to LH II. The presence of the Near Eastern floating elements, combined with the goddess' dress, clearly points to LH II or IIIA, but the former is preferable due to the number of close correspondences with Neopalatial iconography and artefacts, including the half-

²⁴⁵ In this regard, one can compare VI.364, examined in 3.2.4, in which two sacral knots are illustrated hanging from a pillar.

rosette frieze and cup.

The second example in this motif-group is the gold ring I.128 from Mycenae (fig.13), which depicts a figure seated upon a chair holding a leash attached to a collar around a griffin's neck. The griffin's wings are displayed and its head is level with that of the seated figure. This figure wears a long dress or robe that is undecorated apart from a few horizontal bands on the skirt. No breasts are indicated, although the raised arm is in a position that would possibly obscure them. In **2.3.3** I mentioned other examples of this robe, all of which are worn by figures of ambiguous gender, but I noted that it may be a plainer version of the dress worn by the goddess on the Tiryns Daemon Ring. The figure on I.128 is interpreted as a woman by Younger (1988: 180) but as a man by Crowley (1989a: 49). It is tempting to regard the figure as a woman simply because seated men are otherwise unattested in glyptic, but it would be unwise to succumb to such circular reasoning. An analysis of the ring's iconography may shed more light on the matter.

I.128 is the only example in the sub-group that depicts the seated figure restraining the animal, which clearly demonstrates the figure's dominance. Leashed griffins occur elsewhere in glyptic, but always in association with men, as on I.223 from Vapheio and X.268, discussed in **3.3.6**. In both instances the men wear banded robes and both seals were manufactured in LM I(B)/LH IIA.²⁴⁶ A later parallel for the restraining of powerful animals is provided by the seal-type II.8.248 from Knossos, where a man holds the leashes of two large dogs.²⁴⁷ Aside from potentially I.128, there are no instances in glyptic of women restraining griffins, or other animals, on leashes.

²⁴⁶ See **3.3.6** for the justification for dating X.268 to LM I.

²⁴⁷ This scene was discussed in **2.2.3**. An additional instance of a male figure restraining a fantastic creature on a leash occurs upon a fragment of an ivory plaque from the Midea tholos; the animal is either a griffin or a sphinx (NM 7359; Poursat, 1977: 116, no.359).

However, dominance over animals is not inconsistent with feminine iconography in the LBA. In several scenes discussed in 2.3.3 a woman violently grasps birds. Additionally, a standing woman is depicted holding the collar of an enormous dog on the lentoid VS.1B.58 from Asine. Moreover, female figures are closely linked with griffins in LM/LH II-III: griffins flank standing women five times in glyptic, whereas male figures are only once flanked by a pair of griffins.²⁴⁸ More evidence suggesting the existence of a close relationship between women and griffins in LM/LH II-III is provided below.

The only other potential indicator of the figure's gender is that of the griffin. The griffin on I.128 and the dog that accompanies the standing woman on VS.1B.58 are both female, indicated by their prominent dugs. This could be used in support of interpreting the figure on I.128 as female, her gender being reflected in that of the griffin. One could counter that female figures flanked by animals are always accompanied by male lions, indicated by their manes. However, the lion on the right of the central standing woman on VI.315 has both dugs and a mane, indicating that Aegean engravers did not link the latter with gender (Crowley, 2013: 238). This could suggest that one should not place too much emphasis on the apparent gender of the griffin on I.128.

The iconography of I.128 is, therefore, compatible with reading the seated figure as either a man or a woman. The restraining of griffins was more frequently associated with men (although perhaps in a slightly earlier period), whereas griffins were commonly depicted with women in LM/LH II-III, which is probably the date of the ring's manufacture. I would suggest that the engraver of the ring would have been

²⁴⁸ See 2.2.1, 2.3.1, and 2.3.3.

capable of indicating that a woman was depicted if he so chose, by giving the figure prominent breasts or long flowing hair. This leaves two options: either the figure is a man, or their gender was meant to be deliberately ambiguous. If the figure is male, he could be regarded as a ruler, following the same reasoning as that applied to some male figures flanked by animals in **2.2.4**, as a person's ability to subdue a fantastic creature does not necessarily convey divine or even religious status upon them (Thomas & Wedde, 2001: 9). The fact that the figure on I.128 is seated, however, elevates his/her significance. The safest option is perhaps to regard the figure as being of ambiguous gender and as possessing very high status in either the secular or divine worlds, or possibly in both.²⁴⁹

4.3.2 Seated Women with Terrestrial Animals

The next three artefacts include allusions to an outdoor setting, in contrast to the Tiryns Daemon Ring and I.128. The first of these is the damaged and unprovenanced ring IS.114, which depicts a woman sitting in front of a palm. A monkey stands upon its hind-legs and reaches towards the woman in a manner akin to that of the human adorants;²⁵⁰ the woman returns the gesture. The monkey acting as a human emphasises the supernatural nature of the scene, thereby justifying the interpretation of the seated woman as a goddess (Marinatos, 1989: 135). The clearest example of a goddess attended by a monkey appears in the LM IA wall-painting from Xeste 3 in Akrotiri, where a monkey gives the seated woman an offering. Younger (1983: 124), therefore, dates IS.114 to LM I. Similarly, Niemeier (1986: 86) reasons that the presence of the palm connects IS.114 with Neopalatial epiphany rituals. However, in **3.3.3** I argued that

²⁴⁹ Rehak (1995a: 112, 116) provides a possible explanation of why seated men were depicted in wall-paintings, as in the feasting scene in the Throne Room of the palace at Pylos, but perhaps not in glyptic.

²⁵⁰ The resemblance in gesture is especially close to the male figure on X.261.

the palm never occurs in scenes clearly associated with epiphany rituals, meaning that it cannot be viewed as a marker of an enacted epiphany. Moreover, the palm does not appear in securely religious contexts in glyptic until LM/LH II.²⁵¹ The presence of the monkey strongly suggests that the ring was engraved on Crete, as Krzyszkowska (2005: 150) points out that these creatures appear very rarely on the mainland. The evidence, therefore, suggests that IS.114 was engraved in LM II.

The gold ring II.3.103 (fig.14) was excavated at Kalyvia. It provides another instance of a seated woman attended by a monkey acting as a human, this time lifting its forepaws to its face. Exactly the same gesture is employed by the woman who stands behind the monkey. Behind the seated woman is a pillar. The analysis in 3.2 accepted the view that pillars in certain contexts represent buildings with cult functions. This is surely the case here, as Nilsson (1950: 257) notes; it appears at the edge of the field, which is a space frequently occupied by cult buildings in glyptic, as on XI.28 above.

Above the scene are several floating symbols. The central symbol is similar to the branch-like element on X.261 above. The drop-like shape to the right of the seated woman's head, on the other hand, looks like a less detailed rendering of that by the head of the central woman on the Vapheio Ring. Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis (2000: 52) reject Evans' (1930: 141-157) interpretation of these elements as chrysalides and read them as seeds, some of which have started germinating. This is consistent with the interpretation of the branch-like element as an item of vegetation posited above. Dimopoulou & Rethemiotakis (2000: 52) tentatively suggest that these symbols relate to the vegetation cycle, postulating that the presence of the goddess was required to ensure its success, which is a reasonable hypothesis.

²⁵¹ A palm is perhaps depicted on the Neopalatial seal VS.1A.55 from Makrigialos but this is of a different form to that on IS.114.

The close correspondence between the floating symbols on II.3.103 and those found in Neopalatial iconography could suggest a date of LM I for this ring. However, above I accepted Wedde's (1992: 197) point that floating symbols are never attested in Neopalatial scenes of seated women unless the epiphany-conjuring rituals are either alluded to or depicted. This, combined with the LM IIIA context in which II.3.103 was found, suggests a LM II date for this ring, which would make it contemporary with X.261. This scene should not be regarded as depicting an epiphany ritual as it is clearly set in the divine sphere, indicated by the presence of the monkey acting as a human (Wedde, 1992: 199).

The next two examples depict similar scenes of women sitting upon rocks being attended by an animal, the species of which cannot clearly be identified. The lentoid V.253, from Armeni in Western Crete, is the only example in the sub-group that places the woman on the left but, as it does not differ in any other important elements, one should not ascribe too much significance to this.²⁵² On this seal the woman strokes the chin of the animal. On the sealing II.8.239 from Knossos she similarly reaches her hand towards the animal. In both scenes the animals resemble dogs, but neither wears a collar. Morgan (1995: 148) reasonably interprets that on V.253 as a lion, which may also be the case on II.8.239.

Compared to the four previous examples, the scenes on II.8.239 and V.253 appear to be much closer to the real world. The fact that the women have the obedience of terrestrial creatures should not be used to downgrade their status, however, as lions, and perhaps dogs, also attend deities.²⁵³ Crucially, the setting of the scene in a rocky

²⁵² Its material is unclear: the excavator suggests that it could be serpentine (Tamvaki, 1981: 210), whereas the ARACHNE database gives its material as metal, accompanied by a question mark.

²⁵³ See, for example, the nine examples of female figures flanked by lions discussed in 2.3.1 and 2.3.3. The male figure who restrains dogs on II.8.248 is interpreted as a god by Younger (1995: 187).

landscape is consistent with a cult scene depicting a goddess. Deities frequently appear in rocky areas, as on X.261 and VI.284 in the previous sub-group, and the Minoan examples II.3.305 from Kavoussi and II.6.6 from Ayia Triadha, which depict the descending deity. The latter two examples also include trees. The prominent plant that rises from the rocks behind the seated woman on V.253 could potentially have been included as a substitute for a tree.

II.8.239 and V.253 also closely recall Minoan iconography in terms of the affectionate relationship between the women and the animals, which is outlined in more detail below. Despite its LM IIIA2-B context, Tamvaki (1989: 211) and Younger (1983: 123) date V.253 to LM I. A similar date could be proposed for II.8.239, which does not derive from a secure context. However, in their depiction of the women with powerful creatures, either lions or dogs, the scenes are more closely aligned with those of LM/LH II-III A date, compared with the Neopalatial scenes in which herbivores more commonly feature. Both II.8.239 and V.253 were clearly heavily inspired by Minoan iconography; however, the lack of a datable context for the former, and the late context for the latter, suggests that they should be dated to LM II.

4.3.3 Seated Women Flanked by Animals

The final three examples depict seated women flanked by animals. VS.1B.195 is a gold ring attributed to Amari on Crete, although all that remains now is a plaster-cast in the museum of the British School at Athens. The woman sits upon the highest, central step of a low, wide construction upon which the lions rest their forelegs. It is quite similar to the structure in the wall-painting from Xeste 3, which dates to LM IA. This, combined with the use of the later antithetic arrangement, suggests a date of LM I-II for

the original ring. The woman proffers her right hand to one of the lions and she has large thighs and rounded breasts. In contrast, the seated figure on VII.118, an unprovenanced carnelian lentoid, possesses few feminine features. This has led Younger (1995: 169-170) and Müller (2000: 184) to interpret the figure as a man, although Nilsson (1950: 235) argues that the figure is female. (S)he wears the same long shapeless and undecorated dress worn by the seated figure on I.128 above. Interestingly, as on I.128, the animals with which the figure is depicted are potentially female, as the lions are mane-less. The figure should nonetheless probably be regarded as unisex. The figure is sat upon a frontal lion head, which was perhaps included to emphasise her/her dominance over the lions.

The last scene in this sub-group is attested upon three unpublished sealings with the same seal-type from Thebes (Thebes Museum 9909, 9910, and 9924).²⁵⁴ Here the seated woman is flanked by a pair of daemons holding ewers with a pair of griffins behind them. Above are a sun and crescent, which can be regarded as representing Near Eastern influence. The impressing ring should be dated to LM/LH II-III A.

There is no reason to doubt that the figures on the last three examples are divine, due to the combination of being seated, having the attendance of powerful creatures, and the use of the antithetic arrangement that was commonly applied to goddesses in the LBA.

4.3.4 Minoan Precursors and Origins

The motif occurs three times in the LM I sealing deposits, in every instance with a single animal.²⁵⁵ On the seal-type VS.1A.175 from Khania the woman is sitting upon

²⁵⁴ Described by Rehak (1995b: 223) and Younger (1995: 179).

²⁵⁵ II.6.31 from Ayia Triadha depicts a woman with bent knees reaching out to a goat that is standing

a low construction, reaching her hand to a long-horned goat. The construction continues beyond the edge of the field. It could in fact be the lowest part of the stepped structure already referred to numerous times in this chapter, which would suggest that the woman is a goddess. She offers a leaf or small plant to the goat, which imbues their relationship with a nurturing dimension (Marinatos, 1988b: 114). A similarly affectionate relationship can be witnessed on the second Minoan precursor, II.6.30 from Ayia Triadha. The sealing is damaged but the scene that remains shows a seated woman, with her head now missing, accompanied by a long-horned goat, identified by Shapland (2010a: 122) as an agrimi. The woman has one hand placed on her lap, to which the goat lifts its mouth. As on VS.1A.175, the woman appears to be feeding the animal.

On the third Minoan precursor, a damaged sealing from Ayia Triadha (II.6.32), the animal that attends the seated woman is a boar. Only the elements that were deeply incised on the lentoid that impressed the sealing can now be discerned, which are the animal's head and the woman's torso and lower body. It is, therefore, impossible to comment on the nature of the relationship between them.

The theme of seated women accompanied by animals is also attested in two wall-paintings dating to LM IA. In both, the women sit upon the stepped structure in a flowery landscape, suggesting, like II.8.268, that such structures were erected outside. This also suggests that both women are goddesses. The first wall-painting is that from Xeste 3 in Akrotiri, which I briefly referred to above. The much larger iconographic field available compared to glyptic reveals that the stepped structure is of tripartite form; the woman sits upon the top step. The woman is attended by a monkey acting as a human and behind her is a griffin; the presence of both creatures reinforces her divinity.

behind her. The sealing is damaged and it is possible that the woman is not seated but that rather she is leading the animal in a procession, as Wedde (2004: 172) suggests.

A female figure stands behind the monkey.

The second LM IA wall-painting is from Room 14 of the villa at Ayia Triadha (Cameron, 1975: 173-174). To the left of the seated woman are two goats and three stalking cats, surrounded by plants. On the other side of the central structure is a kneeling woman, perhaps picking flowers. This scene differs from those attested in glyptic as the relationship between the seated woman and the animals does not appear to be the focus of the scene. The animals may have been included in order to indicate the wild and rural nature of the surrounding landscape.

To summarise, in the Neopalatial Period the seated women are most frequently shown with herbivores, which they sometimes affectionately feed. In later Crete the affectionate relationship remains but the women are shown with more powerful or fantastic creatures, principally monkeys acting as humans. The latter development is foreshadowed in the LM IA Xeste 3 wall-painting, which may have been influenced by Near Eastern iconography in addition to Minoan art (Marinatos, 1988b: 114-117). On the mainland, in contrast, the seated figures are exclusively accompanied by fantastic creatures or lions and dominance appears in place of affection, as is most evident on I.128.

The theory that affectionate relationships with animals were favoured in glyptic representations on Crete, whereas the ability to control and dominate fantastic creatures was preferred on the mainland, parallels the developments witnessed in the motifs of the standing male and female figures flanked by animals (see **2.2.4** and **2.3.4**). It is also supported by a brief overview of the related motif of standing women with animals in non-antithetic arrangements.

The affectionate relationship with animals appears largely to have transferred to

standing women from about LM/LH II. A division between the mainland and Cretan examples can here be detected. On Crete, a series of soft stone lentoids, attributable to LM II-III, depict standing women raising one arm towards a single animal, usually a goat.²⁵⁶ These lentoids closely resemble the Minoan precursors II.6.30 and VS.1A.175 in terms of the species of the animals and the woman's affectionate relationship with them. On X.160, for example, the woman touches the goat on the mouth, perhaps feeding it. This indicates that the affectionate relationship between women, whether seated or standing, and animals was a Cretan iconographic theme.

On the mainland in this period, in contrast, standing women are far more frequently associated with powerful creatures.²⁵⁷ The close association that apparently existed in LH III between women and griffins in particular has been commented upon by Rehak (1995a: 110). Examples include the standing woman on VS.1B.429 from Tiryns who lifts the front end of a standing griffin off the floor.²⁵⁸ A smaller griffin is carried in the arms of a female figure wearing a boar's tusk helmet on a plaque from the Cult Centre at Mycenae (NM 11652). The association between women and griffins cannot be regarded as a purely Mycenaean trait as griffins appear with women in the Xeste 3 wall-painting, on VIII.95, and in the numerous Cretan examples of female figures flanked by griffins, such as II.3.276. However, the physical relationship is more prevalent on the mainland, as is the case with the motif of female figures flanked by animals (Hiller, 2001: 297). Ascertaining whether these standing women are goddesses

²⁵⁶ These include the unprovenanced lentoids X.160 (dated to LM I by Younger, 1983: 123), VI.328, VI.331, and VS.1B.261 from a LM IIIA2-B context at Armeni. VIII.95 depicts the woman with a griffin. On VI.328 and VI.331 she touches the goat's neck, whereas on VS.1B.261 and VIII.95 she lifts one arm as if greeting the animal.

²⁵⁷ Examples include VS.1B.58 from Asine mentioned above and the fresco from Room 31 of the Cult Centre at Mycenae that depicts a standing woman accompanied by a fragmentary animal depicted using yellow paint. The latter fact suggests that a lion is depicted and not a griffin, as griffins were usually portrayed as white (Rehak, 1992: 54-55).

²⁵⁸ An analogous scene appears upon the unprovenanced carnelian lentoid VIII.146, which depicts a standing figure holding a griffin that is rearing up on its hind-legs.

is beyond the scope of this thesis.²⁵⁹ It must be pointed out that, aside from the griffins, these images generally contain no indicators of possessing a religious nature, which is why they have not been discussed in detail. They have been included here as an extension of the discussion of feminine iconography.

Aside from the developments in the relationships between the women and the animals, the other key change after LM IB was the application of the antithetic arrangement. The seated antithetic version could represent a fusion of the motifs of seated women with one animal and the standing female figures flanked by two. It is relevant to note that the only example of this arrangement that was probably engraved on Crete, VS.1B.195, is also the only one in which an affectionate relationship is alluded to, in the manner in which the woman raises her hand to stroke one of the lions.

The motif of seated women with animals, even terrestrial ones, cannot as readily be assumed to refer to reality as the scenes with human participants. In contrast, the motif could initially have developed in order to express the belief that goddesses were responsible for the protection and sustenance of wild animals and livestock (Tamvaki, 1981: 211; Krattenmaker, 1995a: 125). Regarding the instances with fantastic creatures, scenes such as the Tiryns Daemon Ring illustrate a goddess in the divine sphere, whereas on I.128 and VII.118 the emphasis is placed upon the seated figure's dominance. As with some of the examples discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, this dominance could have belonged either to a goddess or to a mortal (male) ruler. It is not possible to distinguish between these two figures on I.128 and VII.118; this may have been the engraver's intention.

²⁵⁹ A discussion of the possible divinity of the woman with the lion from the Room 31 wall-painting is provided by Rehak (1992: 50-61). Hiller (2001: 296) and K. Galanakis (2005: 82-83) view the standing women with goats as goddesses. See 6.2.3 and 6.3.4 for a brief discussion of images of standing men accompanied by bulls or goats in non-antithetic arrangements.

Table 7: Provenanced Examples of Seated Women with Animals

No.	Tiryns Daemon Ring	I.128	II.3.103	V.253	II.8.239	Thebes Mus. 9909, 9910, 9924
Date (Context)	Unknown	LH II-III A	LM III A	LM III A 2-B1	Unknown	LH IIIB
Date (Stylistic)	LH II	LH II-III A	LM II	LM II	LM II	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Tiryns	Mycenae	Kalyvia	Armeni	Knossos	Thebes
Exact Find-Spot	Pit in Lower Town, Treasure	Panagia Hill cemetery, Tomb 91, pit γ	Tombe dei Nobili, Tomb 2	Tomb 24	Palace, Wooden Staircase & Secretaries' Bureau	Unclear
Shape	R	R	R	L	Hanging nodule (1, L)	Sealings (3, R)
Material	Gold	Gold	Gold	Dark stone?	(HS?)	(M)
Number & Species of Animal(s)	Four daemons	One griffin	One monkey	One lion/dog	One lion/dog	A pair of daemons & a pair of griffins
Items Carried/Held	Daemons carry ewers, woman holds rhyton	Figure holds leash	No	No	No	Daemons hold ewers
Woman's Seat	Camp-stool	Chair	Unclear	Rocks	Rocks	Chair
Additional Elements	Crescent, star, branches above & below, pillar, bird, sacral knot, half-rossette frieze	Griffin wears a collar	One woman, pillar behind woman, branch-like element & seed above	Flower behind woman	None	Footstool, two-tiered platform, star & crescent above

4.4 Conclusions

An examination of the evidence strongly suggests that the motif of seated women with standing figures was inspired by a real epiphany ritual in which a priestess assumed the role of the goddess. Such a position is justified by the presence of equipment that is depicted elsewhere being used in epiphany-conjuring rituals, principally the stepped structure, in addition to trees and a figure-of-eight shield. The earlier phase of the ritual involving the dressing of the priestess may have been depicted on VI.283. This ritual established the convention that seatedness in glyptic could be equated with divinity, although, in order to arrive at a secure identification of seated women as goddesses, it should be combined with other criteria.

Not all scenes of seated women should be regarded as depictions of enacted epiphany rituals, however. The majority of seated women in the later examples, as well as some in the Neopalatial instances, should simply be regarded as goddesses, rather than as enacted epiphanies. The later women largely appeared in similar contexts to the Neopalatial examples but the motif underwent subtle changes. The seated women started to be depicted sitting upon chairs or camp-stools, in preference to rocks (Rehak, 1995b: 225), although the stepped structure continued, appearing on both Crete and the mainland.

Other changes were more specific to either Crete or the mainland. On Crete, the symbols often depicted above scenes of epiphany-conjuring rituals were now used above seated women. They no longer indicated an ecstatic epiphany. Turning to the mainland, the women were more frequently depicted with single males, probably of high status, although this also occurs once on Crete. The scenes may have been intended to stress the male figures' close relationship with the goddess, in order to emphasise the

status of the former. As Wedde (1999: 917) observes, the scenes with single figures probably alluded to a personal, rather than communal, experience of the deity. The theme of divine approval of a male elite was present in LM I, as is demonstrated by II.8.256, but it came to the fore after this point.

A change that occurred in both motifs after the Neopalatial Period is the inclusion of elements derived from the Near East. This is manifested in the celestial symbols above the seated women that are alien to Neopalatial glyptic, and in the application of the antithetic arrangement to the motif of seated women with animals.

Turning specifically to the motif of seated women with animals, all the Neopalatial examples in glyptic show the women in an outdoor setting, touching or reaching to a terrestrial animal. These scenes may have symbolised the goddess' affectionate relationship with animals and nature and, in feeding scenes, her role as provider, as Tamvaki (1981: 211) and Krattenmaker (1995a: 125) suggest. This theme may have continued, but only on Crete, as is attested by II.8.239 and V.253, and by the motif of standing women at peace with animals. On the mainland, the seated women were exclusively depicted with powerful or fantastic creatures such as daemons, and perhaps also lions. A parallel development is seen on the mainland in the iconography of the standing women, who most frequently appear with griffins, which they interact with physically. It appears that, on the mainland, the main function of the motif was now to demonstrate power over the supernatural. I.128 marks the final development, the griffin's leash emphasising its subjugation. In this case it is possible that a man is depicted.

The information provided by these motifs regarding religious practices in the LBA Aegean is outlined in the Conclusion.

CHAPTER 5. STANDING FIGURES WITH ARCHITECTURE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the motifs of single or multiple standing figures with architecture. The architecture can be securely identified as serving a cult function based on its frequent juxtaposition with horns of consecration and the fact that it is targeted by the standing figures with gestures or other actions. In every instance, unless otherwise stated, all of the standing figures face the architecture. As I observed in 4.1.1, the placement of the architecture on the right side of the iconographic field appears to have been largely standardised, although there are several exceptions.

I discuss the examples with multiple figures first. This sub-group consists of ten examples, one of which is a sealing. All ten have secure provenances; this is the only motif discussed in this thesis for which this is the case. This permits a brief discussion of some of the burial contexts in which the artefacts have been discovered, which takes place in 5.4. This motif has three Minoan precursors. The second sub-group depicts a single figure with architecture and totals eight artefacts, including one sealing, but only three have secure provenances. This motif has five Minoan precursors. Both sub-groups broadly date to LM/LH II-III A; the possible exceptions are noted.

There are four key differences between the two sub-groups, aside from the number of figures depicted, which suggest that they represent two separate motifs. Firstly, in the sub-group depicting multiple figures, all of the scenes are associated with metal rings, whereas rings make up less than half the total in the second sub-group. Secondly, the sub-group with multiple figures is entirely restricted to the mainland; in contrast, that with single figures is more evenly distributed between the mainland and

Crete. The third difference concerns the architecture. Large buildings, as opposed to altars, more frequently occur with multiple figures, which additionally suggests that different types of rituals are represented. Finally, only women are depicted in the first sub-group.²⁶⁰ In contrast, both male and female figures are shown singly with architecture. These differences justify the artefacts' separation into two sub-groups.²⁶¹

The first task of this chapter is to identify the architecture depicted. This is sometimes hindered by the lack of consistent relative scale: a structure that is represented as smaller than the standing figures may not have been so in reality. It is therefore necessary to outline the criteria that are applied here to distinguish between buildings, which in reality were larger than the standing figures, and smaller structures such as altars.

The first criterion is the size of the architecture relative to the standing figure(s): generally, a building stands at the height of the figures' chests or higher, whereas an altar is lower. The second is the size relative to the horns of consecration. The appearance of multiple pairs of horns of consecration on top of architecture suggests a building, whereas a single pair that is approximately the width of the structure indicates that an altar is represented. Finally, buildings usually consist of clear architectural elements, such as lintels and pillars.

I have discerned five key classes of architecture, which are displayed in the diagram on p.228. It is important to stress that these classes are not entirely representative of the architecture in the motif-group as there are other types depicted that cannot easily be categorised. The diagram includes a basic outline of the forms of these architectural classes and indicates in which scenes in this motif-group they occur.

²⁶⁰ Men occur twice in the Minoan precursors of the first sub-group, in both instances with a female figure.

²⁶¹ The organisation of the artefacts by the architecture is precluded by the many different classes of architecture depicted, which would make the sub-groups unmanageable.

Most of the classes occur in both sub-groups, although in differing proportions. Some of them are attested in other motifs analysed in Chapters 3 and 4 and these appearances are included within the table. The most thorough discussions of the architecture have been postponed to this point to avoid repetition.

In both sections of this chapter the different classes of architecture are discussed in the same order. I first analyse the scenes that include buildings, the clearest examples of which consist of two uprights and a lintel with a space in between. This type of architecture has been identified as an entranceway, for example by Evans (1901: 184); **5.2.1** provides justification for this interpretation. The remaining architectural classes consist of rectangular altars, incurved altars, tree-shrines, and stepped structures. The term ‘tree-shrine’ here refers to a tree enclosed within masonry or wood that is of comparable size to an altar. The tree-shrines are generally depicted being utilised in epiphany-conjuring rituals. Like Nilsson (1950: 270-271), I argue that the structures should be understood as being built around the base of the trees, the trunks of which are omitted in iconography. The tree-shrines are distinct from the stepped structures, which can also incorporate trees used in epiphany-conjuring rituals. This type of architecture was encountered in **3.3.2**, **4.2.1**, **4.2.4**, and **4.3.4** and it appears in one of the Minoan precursors outlined below. The analysis of the different classes of architecture aims to ascertain if they are present in the Neopalatial Period, which in some cases will necessitate examining iconography beyond that of the Minoan precursors of this motif-group.

Having identified the architecture, I intend to determine its function within the scene, and thereby identify the rituals potentially being depicted. In Chapters 1 and 4, I accepted the contention that some glyptic scenes refer to rituals that were performed in

reality. It is *a priori* likely that the motifs of standing figures with architecture were based on real rituals, as scholars such as German (2005: 9, 50-71) assume. These rituals include the procession, dance, and the deposition of offerings upon an altar. None of the scenes include elements incompatible with such an interpretation, such as fantastic creatures or actions that are unachievable in reality. Moreover, I observed in 1.5 that some of the architectural classes depicted in iconography, such as rectangular and incurved altars, are attested archaeologically. I also provided references to locations in which such rituals could have been performed, which occur in both rural and palatial contexts. Both of these types of space appear to be attested in the scenes discussed here. Due to this relationship with reality, the majority of the figures are here interpreted as mortal worshippers, which is the prevailing interpretation in scholarship (Marinatos, 1989: 131-137; Niemeier, 1989: 167; 1990: 166; K. Galanakis, 2005: 108).²⁶²

Nonetheless, the possibility that some elements of the scenes discussed in this chapter do not represent reality is explored when necessary. This is especially relevant regarding the landscape. An objective of this chapter is to identify the key features of a cult landscape in iconography, which is achieved by observing the elements that recur in multiple scenes. Indications of landscape include the type of groundline depicted and the presence of flora or rocks, as well as the architecture itself.

The theme of *animals* with architecture has already been encountered at several points in this thesis, most notably in relation to the pillar; these scenes were discussed in 3.2. Animals also appear with the stepped structure, but generally only when it is sat upon by a goddess (see 4.3.4), with I.123, discussed in 3.3.2, providing the only possible exception. In one instance included in this motif-group (I.119) the architecture

²⁶² Cases for a divine nature have been put forward for the figures on I.279 and on the Minoan precursors II.3.15 and VS.1A.176, which are appraised in 5.3.2 and 5.3.5.5.

appears with a standing figure who is accompanied by a goat. Two further instances depict animals in association with architecture. The gold ring I.292, which also includes a goat, is briefly mentioned in the discussion of the motif with multiple figures. V.198, which illustrates a bull tied to an altar, is discussed in more detail in **6.2.3** in relation to the sacrificial ritual. With these exceptions, the architecture analysed here never appears with animals in glyptic.

5.2 Multiple Standing Figures with Architecture

This sub-group consists of ten artefacts: seven gold rings, one bimetallic ring, one steatite ‘matrix’, and one sealing impressed by a metal ring. All were discovered on the mainland. The number of women depicted ranges from two to three. The same poses and gestures are generally used by all the women in the scene; usually they raise one arm and they never touch each other. The architecture that most frequently appears in this sub-group is a building. In seven instances a procession is indicated by the fact that the women’s feet and heads all face in the same direction.²⁶³ Their postures also seem to convey movement. On V.422b and VS.1B.115, in contrast, at least one of the figures appears to be stationary. There are three Minoan precursors, two of which derive from the LM IB sealing deposits. The types of architecture that appear in these precursors differ from those in the later examples of the motif.

5.2.1 Women with Entrancesways

The first three examples all depict a building consisting of two uprights and a lintel topped with horns of consecration. I.108 was discovered at Mycenae. Its bezel is

²⁶³ As on I.86, I.108, I.191, I.313, V.728, VS.1B.113, and VS.1B.114.

made up of two equally sized sheets of metal (one gold, one silver) that were attached to a metal core, but the lower, silver section has corroded (Persson, 1942b: 59). This means that no indications of the landscape are preserved. The structure is topped with only one pair of horns of consecration but the horns are not placed centrally and are approximately half the width of the lintel, indicating that a building is represented. The central of the three women raises her left hand in a salute but her companions keep their hands lowered. The central woman is further emphasised by her slightly larger scale.²⁶⁴

Only four other engraved bimetallic rings have been discovered in the LBA Aegean in addition to I.108.²⁶⁵ They all derive from LM/LH II-III A contexts, with which they are contemporary, leading Younger (1984a: 89) to suggest that rings of this type were first created after the Neopalatial Period and that they were primarily associated with the mainland (also Boardman, 1970: 56). It is unclear whether bimetallic rings served a different function to other rings; it is probable that two different metals were used simply to create a decorative effect. They were certainly used sphragistically, as I.313 below was impressed by such a ring.

Despite the fact that the women's feet are not preserved, a procession appears to be clearly indicated, as on the majority of the examples below. This was a very popular motif in LM/LH II-III A; I cited a number of glyptic examples of processions without an object in 1.2.4. It is important to emphasise that all of the processions discussed here are performed only by women. Men are depicted in objectless processions on the seal-types I.170 from Mycenae and on II.8.276 from Knossos, on which they carry figure-of-eight shields. Mixed processions are also attested, as on I.361 from Pylos, discussed in 4.2.3, where the object is a seated woman. This raises the possibility that there were different

²⁶⁴ See the discussion of II.6.1 below for a clearer example of the differentiation of the central figure.

²⁶⁵ I.91 from Mycenae depicts herbivores, as does I.201 from Asine. I.200, also from Asine, illustrates bull-leaping, whereas II.3.113 from Kalyvia is decorated with a frieze of figure-of-eight shields.

classes of procession, some of which were restricted to a particular gender (German, 2005: 26).²⁶⁶ Moreover, there is a Neopalatial precedent for the restriction of certain types of cult activity to women: only women are depicted dancing in the epiphany-conjuring rituals (see **4.1.2**).

VS.1B.113 (fig.15) is one of three gold rings in this sub-group that were discovered in the same tomb at Aidonia. Here the building is topped with two pairs of horns of consecration. Two women appear to walk towards it, each carrying a flower in their raised left hands. The flower carried by the woman on the left is a lily whereas the woman on the right carries a papyrus flower (Wedde, 2004: 162). On another ring from the same tomb at Aidonia (VS.3.243), two women likewise carry a lily and papyrus flower each, but no architecture is included (Wedde, 2004: 167). Furumark (1988: 71) and Niemeier (1989: 184) reasonably contend that these flowers are offerings that are to be deposited upon cult architecture, which is supported by several scenes in the second sub-group depicting flowers or branches being placed upon altars.²⁶⁷ The plants carried by other women in this sub-group can be interpreted likewise.

VS.1B.113 is the first example in this sub-group that includes clear indications of the landscape in which the scene is set. Three small rocks are depicted at the base of the building. Similar rocks appear at the base of the entranceway on V.728 below, but they also occur with smaller structures, as on I.119 and VI.279 in the second sub-group. In Neopalatial glyptic, rocks appear at the base of the elongated boulder on the Vapheio Ring, below the feet of the male figure who is reaching up to touch the tree rising from behind the boulder.²⁶⁸ Rocks also perhaps appear at the base of the tree on the Sellopoulo Ring.

²⁶⁶ In **6.2** and **6.3** I refer to potential examples of sacrificial processions.

²⁶⁷ See especially I.279 and I.410 below.

²⁶⁸ The reasoning behind the identification of this element as an elongated boulder is provided in **5.3.5**.

In addition to the rocks, on VS.1B.113 two lilies and a papyrus flower rise up from the ground between the women. Landscapes that include flowers are attested in Neopalatial glyptic, most prominently on the Isopata Ring, where the flowers are probably an indication that the scene is taking place in a rural area, perhaps a hilly meadow (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1990: 193).²⁶⁹ This is not the case on VS.1B.113, however, as the groundline resembles two rows of bricks, indicating a paved urban location (Marinatos, 1989: 136). Paving occurs in cult scenes in Neopalatial glyptic, as on the Archanes Ring, but never in association with flowers (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1990: 193). The combination of flowers and paving on VS.1B.113 suggests that these elements do not strictly relate to reality. It is likely that the flowers were depicted not to locate the scene in a rural area, but to emphasise the cult nature of the actions taking place, which is consistent with the role of flowers in Neopalatial glyptic. Flowers and rocks, therefore, are iconographic shorthand for a cult landscape.

The third attestation of this type of building is provided by the gold ring V.728 from Mega Monastiri in Thessaly. Here it is depicted twice, to either side of the two women. That on the right is topped with two pairs of horns of consecration, but that on the left continues beyond the edge of the field so only one pair is depicted. The women both face the building on the right and raise their left hands almost to their faces but keep their right arms lowered. There is no groundline depicted but the landscape on V.728 otherwise appears to be very similar to that on VS.1B.113 above. The three small dots at the base of the right-hand building may be abbreviated representations of rocks and the unclear element by the leading woman's skirt is probably a flower.

The fact that one of the buildings on V.728 appears behind the women suggests

²⁶⁹ An additional instance of flowers in a cult scene in Neopalatial glyptic includes the Poros Ring. V.253, discussed in 4.3.2, provides a slightly later example.

that they have passed by it. This vitiates the assumption that the building on the right, and so the identical ones on I.108 and VS.1B.113, is the terminus of a procession, that is, a shrine or other cult building (Wedde, 2004: 159). In form, this type of architecture resembles an entranceway, as Evans (1901: 184) observed; he labelled the structure on I.108 a ‘sacral gateway’.

The interpretation of this type of architecture as an entranceway is rendered more probable by the fact that entranceways or doorways are depicted in cult scenes in other media. Examples in wall-painting derive from Room 3 of Xeste 3 at Akrotiri and Room 31 in the Cult Centre at Mycenae, where a doorway was depicted to the left of the two standing goddesses. The incorporation of real entranceways into the iconographic space is also attested. Niemeier (1986: 76-77) and Marinatos (1993: 108) argue that two griffins flanked the doorway to the Throne Room of the palace at Knossos. The interpretation of the architecture on I.108, VS.1B.113, and V.728 as entranceways is, therefore, consistent with Aegean iconography in both cult and palatial contexts.

Entranceways, on this basis, can be regarded as part of the cult landscape, like the flowers and rocks. However, whereas the latter are based on iconographic prototypes and, in these scenes, do not refer to real landscapes, it is likely that the entranceways provide meaningful information regarding the location in which the rituals are taking place (Wedde, 2004: 159). It is highly probable that the entranceways refer to enclosure walls (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1989b: 253-254); that the scenes under discussion were imagined to be taking place *within* an architectural complex such as a court is suggested by the paving on VS.1B.113. Moreover, trees, which could indicate a rural environment, never occur in conjunction with the entranceways.

The evidence points towards an urban setting for the procession depicted in conjunction with entranceways, the most obvious candidate for which is the palace. The remaining palatial architecture is certainly consistent with such an interpretation: Wedde (2004: 151-152) and German (2005: 50) suggest that processions (in addition to dancing) could have taken place in an open courtyard.²⁷⁰ Moreover, the numerous processional figures depicted upon the walls of the palaces at Knossos, Thebes, Pylos, Tiryns, and elsewhere provide the clearest indications that processions were performed in palatial contexts (Cameron, 1975: 140; Wedde, 2004: 152; German, 2005: 50). Further evidence for a connection between the entranceway and palace is provided in **5.3.1**.

5.2.2 Women with Other Buildings

VS.1B.115, another gold ring from Aidonia, depicts two structures, as on V.728, both of which appear to consist of entranceways that have been multiplied. They have two storeys that are subdivided by vertical lines. The inclusion of multiple pairs of horns of consecration on top of the structures justifies their interpretation as buildings. That these are indeed entranceways is suggested by the fact that the left-hand building includes possible half-rosettes between the uprights. Half-rosettes appear in the same position on the structure on the seal-type II.7.74 from Zakros, which is flanked by lions. This architecture is of very similar form to that on I.108, VS.1B.113, and V.728, which leads Nilsson (1950: 255) to reasonably interpret it as an entranceway. The half-rosettes are summarily represented below the lintel. The same architecture, with clearer half-rosettes, is multiplied on the Master Impression from Khania to give the impression of a town or palatial complex (Hallager, 1985: 31). A large, urban architectural complex is

²⁷⁰ German (2005: 50 n.141) provides a catalogue of sites that have yielded evidence of courts or courtyards in association with palaces, villas, and other settlements on Crete.

probably likewise alluded to on VS.1B.115.

Three women appear between the buildings on this ring. All of their feet point toward the left-hand structure, as do the bodies of the outer women, but the central woman turns to look at that on the right and has a posture of one hand raised and one lowered. This gesture is suggestive of a dance, as Krystalli-Votsi (1989: 40) observes, and is discussed in more detail below. The performance of a dance, combined with the frontal rendering of the central woman, renders an interpretation of this scene as depicting a procession less viable. This ring was clearly not the work of the engraver(s) responsible for VS.1B.113 above and VS.1B.114 below as the engraving of VS.1B.115 is far less naturalistic compared to the other rings; the women have beaks in place of mouths and none of the lines that make up the buildings are entirely straight. There are no indications of the landscape, although the dashed groundline perhaps refers to paving.

The architecture on the gold ring I.191 from Midea is more complex than that of the previous examples. A pillar supports the left side of the lintel and appears directly below a pair of horns of consecration. No other pairs are depicted atop the lintel, but that above the pillar is only one third of the lintel's width, indicating that a large structure is represented. Two birds flutter within the vacant space to the right of the pillar, thus providing another example of the connection between birds and cult buildings, as outlined in **3.2.5**. To the right of these birds is a building consisting of three storeys that appears to continue beyond the edge of the field. I suggest that the space between the pillar and this building is equivalent to that represented by the entranceways above; that it referred to a large, open-air space enclosed by walls is suggested by the presence of the birds. Moreover, the only potential indications of landscape on I.191 are the three small dashes that appear below the birds, which could

refer to paving. The triple-storied building should be understood as being contained within that same architectural space. A similar structure consisting of multiple storeys appears upon II.8.256 from Knossos, which is often regarded as a palace (Krattenmaker, 1995b: 54; Marinatos, 1995: 46). The building on I.191 should be likewise interpreted; I tentatively suggest that a palatial complex is represented.

Both of the women on I.191 raise their left arm and lower their right but keep it at a distance from their body, like the central woman on VS.1B.115 above. Wedde (1992: 186) and German (2005: 56) note that this pose is suggestive of a dance and point out that similar gestures are used by the ‘dancing’ women in the Sacred Grove and Dance Fresco from Knossos (Cameron, 1975: 690, 692-693). Moreover, exactly the same gesture is used by the central women on the Vapheio and Archanes Rings, who are unanimously interpreted as dancing (Furumark, 1965: 91-92; Hägg, 1986: 46). Wedde (1992: 190) and Marinatos (1993: 185-186) reasonably suggest that these women are dancing in order to invoke the deity in an epiphany-conjuring ritual. The scene on I.191, in contrast, cannot be connected with such rituals (*contra* Wedde, 1992: 186) due to the lack of floating symbols and boulder-touching or tree-grasping, all of which are depicted on the Vapheio and Archanes Rings. The fact that one of the women on I.191 carries flowers, like the women on VS.1B.113, suggests that the dance could be performed in combination with a procession (German, 2005: 57).

There is iconographic evidence that dancing, like the procession, could be performed in palatial contexts. The Sacred Grove and Dance Fresco demonstrates that the depiction of dance was a suitable theme for the walls of the palace and German (2005: 28), following Evans (1930: 66-80), reasonably suggests that the events depicted

took place at Knossos.²⁷¹ This counts in favour of the interpretation of the architecture on I.191 and VS.1B.115 as a palatial complex.²⁷²

A different structure appears upon VS.1B.114, the third ring from Aidonia. It resembles a square subdivided into nine smaller squares and is not topped with horns of consecration. Instead, a large tree stands in front of the structure and leans over the first of the three women that walk towards it, all of whom are carrying flowers (Wedde, 2004: 160 n.52). The architecture is not depicted on the same level as the women, but stands above several rocks. Wedde (2004: 159) tentatively identifies the structure as a peak sanctuary. However, it is significantly smaller than the tree that stands beside it, which also rises from the rocks, suggesting that a smaller structure is represented, rather than a large building in the distance.

I suggest that the architecture on VS.1B.114 was iconographically inspired by structures associated with epiphany-conjuring rituals, which is supported by three iconographic factors. Firstly, a similar structure appears in conjunction with the epiphany of a deity in the form of a small floating figure on the gold ring I.292 from Pylos, which may be of Minoan manufacture (Tamvaki, 1985: 291; Niemeier, 1990: 167). The god is greeted by a standing male and a goat. The structure appears in the centre of the scene and, as on VS.1B.114, it is set atop rocks in a higher position in the field. Secondly, the elongated boulder on the Vapheio Ring and the tree-shrine variant on I.119 in the second sub-group both have rocks at their base, from which rise trees that are very similar to that on VS.1B.114. The tree on the former ring is pulled upon by a male figure. The third piece of evidence for a connection with the iconography of

²⁷¹ In 3.2.1 I noted that several scholars argue that the related Grandstand Fresco depicts the west façade of the Central Court at Knossos. German (2005: 50) provides additional archaeological evidence that suggests that dancing ceremonies were performed in the palaces at Knossos, Phaistos, and Mallia.

²⁷² It is important to emphasise that the iconographic evidence indicates that the dance was not restricted to palatial settings, as is suggested by the Isopata Ring, cited above.

epiphany-conjuring rituals is the wavy line in the upper part of the field on VS.1B.114, which possibly indicates the sky (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 254). A very similar line is depicted upon II.6.4 from the Ayia Triadha sealing deposit, the Poros Ring, and possibly on II.3.114 from Kalyvia.²⁷³ In each case, the line is depicted above epiphany-conjuring rituals involving boulder-touching or tree-grasping.

VS.1B.114 was clearly heavily inspired by Minoan iconography (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 254), which is most evident in the architecture. I suggest that this structure is more reliant on earlier iconographic prototypes than reality. The entranceways outlined above probably refer to a real space that could be entered, although their form is conventionalised. The structure on VS.1B.114, in contrast, can be read as a generic symbol for a cult structure (Hägg, 1981: 37). Similarly, the rocks, like those that appear at the base of several entranceways, are not indicative of the environment in which the scene is set but can be regarded as iconographic shorthand for a cult landscape. I observed in 4.2.4 that rocks often serve as a seat for a goddess in the Neopalatial Period, thus they are also an appropriate base for a cult structure.

5.2.3 Women with a Rectangular Altar

The only sealing in this sub-group is I.313 from Pylos, which depicts three women proceeding to the left, each with one arm raised. The architecture is preserved as a rectangular object half the height of the field that is topped with a lintel. No horns of consecration are present atop it but, due to its position in the scene, it is likely that it is a cult structure. I follow Müller et al. (1997: 2) in interpreting it as an altar, rather than a building, *contra* Blegen & Rawson (1966: 317), due to the fact that it reaches only to

²⁷³ This is very different from the strongly curved lines that appear on V.199, the Great Goddess Ring, and the Tiryns Daemon Ring, all discussed in Chapter 4.

the height of the women's waists. A horizontal line bisects the field and Müller et al. (1997: 2) note the presence of two small rivet-marks, one on the left and a second between the middle and last women. They additionally point out that the two horizontal halves of the composition are not fully aligned and that the impression is of a greater quality in the lower half (Müller et al., 1997: 2). These features indicate that the sealing was impressed by a ring consisting of two different metals, the upper plate having been incorrectly aligned (Müller et al., 1997: 2-3). I.313, therefore, provides a parallel for the bimetallic ring I.108, discussed above.

A vertical projection rises from the ground between the middle and last women on this sealing. It tapers to a point almost halfway up the field and is decorated with horizontal bands near the base. Pillars of this size usually only occur in association with daemons holding ewers, as on the Tiryns Daemon Ring.²⁷⁴ This type of pillar was interpreted as an offering table in 3.2.2, following Rehak (1995b: 217), but, as that on I.313 tapers at the top, such an interpretation is less reasonable in this instance. It could be a marker of an urban cult space; as the impression is incomplete it is not possible to arrive at a secure interpretation.

5.2.4 Women with Other Architecture

The next ring in the sub-group is I.86 from Mycenae, which depicts three women with over-sized and distorted hands. It is possible that the central figure is holding flowers or branches; her companions may do likewise but with one hand only (Niemeier, 1989: 169). The structure on this ring is topped with only one pair of horns of consecration, which covers the width of the lintel. This, combined with the

²⁷⁴ Further examples of low pillars with daemons are cited in 3.2.2.

structure's low height relative to the women, suggests that it is an altar.

Depicted between the altar's uprights is an object of columnar form with three bands at the top; it resembles a pedestal lamp.²⁷⁵ Such lamps were commonly made in stone on Crete between MM III and LM IIIA and several examples, presumably exports, have been discovered on the mainland (Warren, 1969: 50-51). Indeed, two stone pedestal lamps were found in a tomb at Mycenae; both have three raised mouldings similar to those on the item on I.86 (NM 3159 and 3160; Warren, 1969: 58). Lamps have been discovered in association with artefacts of cult significance: several stone lamps were discovered in a deposit from the palace at Zakros that also contained the famous Sanctuary Rhyton, a bull's head rhyton, and a tripod altar (Gesell, 1985: 139).²⁷⁶ A LM I parallel for the depiction of pedestal lamps in a cult context in glyptic is provided by the Knossos Ring, described in 4.2.1, which illustrates a tree-shrine of ashlar construction (Marinatos, 1989: 134). Directly below the tree, in the space between the uprights, is a thin, narrow object, the base and uppermost parts of which are of equal width. It has two notches at its centre; in this it recalls a marble pedestal lamp discovered in the palace at Knossos (HM 28; Evans, 1930: 27, fig.14b; Warren, 1969: 57). On this ring and on I.86 the lamps could have been included in order to reinforce the cultic nature of the space.²⁷⁷

The only indication of landscape on I.86 is the trefoil element that appears behind the women. This closely resembles the central focus of the antithetic animal group on I.155 from Mycenae, discussed in 3.3.4. It can perhaps be regarded as equivalent to the flowers of the previous examples.

²⁷⁵ An object of a slightly different form appears beneath an altar on the right-hand side of the gold ring I.126 from Mycenae.

²⁷⁶ Additionally, lamps have been discovered alongside offering and libation tables in House E at Mallia and in association with bull's head rhyta in Block II at Palaikastro (Gesell, 1985: 31, 108).

²⁷⁷ The lamps need not necessarily be regarded as being literally housed within the altars.

The next example, V.422b, appears upon a steatite mould from Eleusis. It measures 5.9 x 4.1cm and is engraved with two motifs of the same size and shape as ring bezels, one above the other. Sheets of gold foil would have been laid over the design and pressed down (Younger, 1983: 128), with the resulting image being used to decorate bezel cores made of a cheaper material (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 246). V.422 was discovered in a burial context and I would suggest that it was buried with its owner who had used it in life.

The design V.422b illustrates two women holding branches.²⁷⁸ Similar plants rise from the ground, suggesting a rural environment. The woman on the right is rendered frontally but her companion leans over a strange structure on the left. It consists of three uprights of differing heights that are each topped with a double lintel. No horns of consecration are present; the structure is instead enclosed by an oval line. Pini (1975: 322) and Goodison (1989: 99) interpret it not as a building but as three separate pithoi with lids. The items on the left of the field on the Vapheio Ring and on II.3.15 in the second sub-group look similar and they have likewise been interpreted as pithoi by Marinatos (1989: 131). However, in 5.3.5 I accept the suggestion of Niemeier (1989: 174-175) and Warren (1990: 195) that these objects are elongated boulders, which were sometimes enclosed. I therefore follow Niemeier's (1989: 167) reading of the object on V.422b as a type of cult structure, perhaps a collection of elongated boulders. These elongated boulders only appear in Neopalatial glyptic and on stylistic grounds Younger (1983: 128) dates V.422a and V.422b to LM I. In this respect it is relevant to note that a talismanic amygdaloid was discovered in another tomb in the same cemetery at Eleusis and is likewise dated to LM I.²⁷⁹ The presence of other

²⁷⁸ The other design, V.422a, shows birds.

²⁷⁹ V.421, which was discovered in tomb Θπ4.

Minoan artefacts in the same area lends weight to the theory that V.422 is of Minoan manufacture, as does the fact that the tomb in which it was found was first used in LH I (Mylonas, 1975: 295-307; Papadimitriou, 2001: 69-70).

The final example in this sub-group is the gold ring I.127 from Mycenae (fig.16), which differs from the other scenes as the two women are arranged antithetically. They flank a symmetrical structure, which they target with mirrored gestures of hands raised to their heads, like the central figure on I.108. The lower part of the central focus consists of two steps that terminate at the top in a row of dashes. The bottom steps on the right and left are filled with similar dashes. Above the steps are five vertical lines, the outer two of which are dotted, that are in turn topped with three horizontal lines. At the top of the structure are elements that Wedde (1995: 499) tentatively identifies as squills with the fronds hanging down.²⁸⁰

The most reasonable interpretation of this architecture was provided by Nilsson (1950: 182), who suggests that the lowest section represents the walls of an enclosure and that the vertical line of dots between them is a pathway leading upwards to a cult structure containing three pillars. The incorporation of multiple pillars into a cult structure is to some extent paralleled by the architecture on XI.28, described in 4.2.1. Nilsson (1950: 182) posits that the ‘squills’ above the structure are actually a variation of the horns of consecration. In form, they resemble triple frames that have been rendered upside-down; the objects’ curve is especially similar to those that appear above the female figure flanked by animals on II.8.255, described in 2.3.1. As the shape of the frames was based on that of horns, as is demonstrated in 2.3.2, it is possible that the elements on I.127 represent an abbreviated version of horns of consecration that was

²⁸⁰ More information regarding squills is provided in 5.3.5.

necessitated by the lack of space available.

The architecture on I.127, therefore, represents the entire architectural complex (the enclosure wall, the paved open area, and the main structure), further expanding the scene on I.191. In contrast to the flowers that rise between the women on VS.1B.113 and V.728, on I.127 the vegetation takes the form of two branches or ears of wheat, which flank the structure. Wedde (1995: 499) suggests that these branches could potentially be markers of sacred ground, which is consistent with their appearance on the Tiryns Daemon Ring, in association with a seated goddess. An enlarged version of these elements is depicted behind the woman on the right, its outline emphasised by a row of dots. A strange object, possibly a bush, occupies the corresponding position on the left. The groundline resembles paving. The landscape is therefore consistent with that represented in the above examples, but the scene on I.127 cannot be regarded as representing a real ritual due to the antithetic arrangement of the women.

5.2.5 Minoan Precursors

The motif with multiple figures has three Minoan precursors. The first is II.6.1 from the LM IB Ayia Triadha sealing deposit. Three female figures stand to the left of a simple structure comprising two uprights topped with a lintel with a space between. It is very similar to the entranceways represented on I.108, VS.1B.113, and V.728 above. This parallel is enhanced by the fact that a leafy plant appears to the left of the structure on II.6.1, in an analogous position to the flowers on VS.1B.113 and V.728. The crucial difference is that no horns of consecration are depicted on top of the structure on II.6.1: instead, it is topped with a tree. The closest parallels for architecture with a flat top from which a tree rises are all waist-high tree-shrines, which are often depicted being used in

epiphany-conjuring rituals by figures that pull upon the trees they enclose.²⁸¹ The structure on II.6.1, therefore, can likewise be identified as a tree-shrine (Marinatos, 1989: 131).

The connection between the scene on II.6.1 and the epiphany-conjuring rituals is further suggested by the fact that all three figures have their hands on their hips, which, like the gesture discussed above,²⁸² is indicative of a dance (Furumark, 1988: 72; German, 2005: 56, 60). This gesture is also utilised by the central woman on I.126 from Mycenae, who is taking part in a dance iconographically inspired by the LM I epiphany rituals (Niemeier, 1990: 169; Marinatos, 1993: 185-187). II.6.1 differs from other scenes of epiphany-conjuring rituals as the central figure is twice the size of her companions. The flanking of a central woman by two smaller female figures is depicted on I.159 from Mycenae and on the unprovenanced lentoid II.3.218.²⁸³ There is nothing to support Younger's (1992: 268-269) suggestion that the flanking figures on II.6.1 and I.159 are bound and being led by the central woman. Lines do indeed hang from all of the figures' skirts; these are not binding ropes but tassels comparable to those on the skirts of the women carrying animals on I.221 and VS.1A.369, discussed in **6.3.1**.

Niemeier (1989: 181-182) suggests that the central woman on II.6.1 is a goddess, based on her larger size. I, however, concur with Wedde (2004: 177) that she is simply an older woman accompanying two girls, their smaller size being indicative of their youth relative to the woman. The convention of employing differences in size to indicate comparable differences in age also appears on the later Great Goddess Ring. K.

²⁸¹ These include the structures on the Archanes and Poros Rings, as well as that on II.3.15 in the second sub-group, all of which date to LM I.

²⁸² With one hand raised and the other lowered at a distance from the body, which appears on I.191 and VS.1B.115.

²⁸³ II.4.136 from Knossos has a similar arrangement but gives the three figures animal-like heads. See **2.3.3** for an explanation of the 'wings' of the central woman on I.159.

Galanakis (2005: 69) hypothesises that the scene on II.6.1 may have possessed an initiatory character and Marinatos (1993: 188) reasonably interprets the two smaller figures as ‘novices’. Theoretically, they could be being instructed in the performance of an epiphany-conjuring ritual involving the dance. One could imagine that they will then be taught how to use the tree-shrine in order to invoke the deity’s presence. This scene could have provided a prototype for the differentiation of the central figure, which was witnessed on I.108 and VS.1B.115 above, although to a lesser extent.²⁸⁴

The second Minoan precursor is the sealing II.7.5 from the Zakros deposit. It differs from the scenes discussed thus far in several key aspects. Firstly, the two standing figures are male and female, whereas in the later appearances of the motif only women appear. They are standing close together with their outer arms raised and their inner arms lowered so that their hands almost touch. The second key difference is in the architecture itself: it consists of a profile figure-of-eight shield that is apparently enclosed by two vertical projections to either side of it. In 4.2.4, I noted that the Minoans used figure-of-eight shields in epiphany-conjuring rituals and argued that HMS 3668 depicts a seated woman with an enclosed figure-of-eight shield. The figure-of-eight shield enclosures on this seal and on II.7.5 are, therefore, comparable to the tree-shrines, which function as tree enclosures. Men and women are often depicted performing epiphany-conjuring rituals together in glyptic so the fact that the genders are not segregated on II.7.5 is not surprising.²⁸⁵

This sub-group’s final Minoan precursor is VS.1B.194, which also depicts a man and a woman standing next to a structure that is unparalleled in the later examples

²⁸⁴ The iconographic superiority of the central position is clearly exemplified in the construction of antithetic animals flanking a central focus, discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3.

²⁸⁵ Men and women are depicted together on the Archanes and Vapheio Rings, on II.3.114 from Kalyvia, and on the later ring I.126 from Mycenae.

of the motif. The scene was engraved upon a ring probably made of metal; however, the original has been lost and all that remains is a plaster-cast housed in the museum of the British School at Athens.²⁸⁶ The original is dated on stylistic grounds to LM I in the *CMS* catalogue, which is strongly supported by an analysis of the architecture.

The structure consists of three horizontally banded columns of different heights topped with vertical projections. The closest glyptic parallel for the architecture is provided by II.7.218, a seal-type from the LM IB Zakros deposit. It depicts a very similar structure, also topped with smaller vertical projections, with two figure-of-eight shields lying at its base.²⁸⁷ The identification of this structure as a figure-of-eight shield enclosure is precluded, firstly, by the lack of figure-of-eight shields on VS.1B.194 and, secondly, by the fact that the architecture on VS.1B.194 and II.7.218 is much more complex than the enclosure on II.7.5.

A second seal-type from Zakros (II.7.219) similarly represents two figure-of-eight shields lying before architecture, but here it much more closely resembles that upon which the male figure stands on the Khania Master Impression, which, as was noted above, probably represents a town or palace (Hallager, 1985: 31). Hogarth (1902: 88) likewise argues that the architecture on II.7.219 represents a town or a palatial building. Assuming that the structures on II.7.218 and II.7.219 are semantically linked by the identically placed figure-of-eight shields, it becomes reasonable to argue that the structure on the former seal-type, and so the identical one on VS.1B.194, also represents either a town or a palatial building. None of the structures are topped with horns of consecration, which means that their connection with cult architecture cannot be

²⁸⁶ C.f. VS.1B.195, discussed in 4.3.3.

²⁸⁷ There is no evidence to support Krattenmaker's (1995b: 55) suggestion that the projections on this seal-type and on VS.1B.194 represent horns of consecration viewed in profile. If the projections were meant to be understood as horns of consecration they would have been clearly rendered as such.

assumed.²⁸⁸ The nature of the standing figures on VS.1B.194 is similarly ambiguous.

The chief significance of VS.1B.194 is that it provides a precedent for the phenomenon witnessed on several rings above, that is, the depiction of comparatively small structures relative to the standing figures that refer to a much larger architectural complex, perhaps the palace or a part thereof. Complex architecture appears on I.191 and VS.1B.115, but in LM/LH II-IIIa the architecture is more usually simplified and reduced so that it resembles a simple entranceway, which is now topped with horns of consecration. Further evidence in support of the theory that this architecture referred to a part of the palace is provided after an examination of the second sub-group.

None of these Minoan precursors depict a procession, with the possible exception of II.6.1, although here the emphasis is clearly on the dance. Processions do occur elsewhere in Neopalatial glyptic, however. Examples are provided by the depictions of multiple figures moving in the same direction carrying weapons and/or garments from the LM IB sealing deposits of Ayia Triadha and Zakros.²⁸⁹ These figures never carry flowers or branches and there is only one tenable attestation of a procession with a building, on the incomplete seal-type II.6.11 from Ayia Triadha, where the remains of a structural pillar appear behind the figures. Like the dance, these Neopalatial processions were probably connected with epiphany rituals, as was accepted in 4.2.3. None of the later attestations of the motif of multiple figures with architecture can be associated with epiphany rituals, although VS.1B.114 was clearly inspired by iconographic elements used to depict such rituals. Krzyszkowska (2005: 254) is therefore right to state that the later scenes of processions do not have clear Minoan precursors.

²⁸⁸ The figure-of-eight shields on the Zakros seal-types should not be connected with epiphany-conjuring rituals in the absence of human figures.

²⁸⁹ Examples are provided in 3.2.4, in relation to VI.364, and in 4.2.3, in the discussion of VI.283.

Table 8: Women with Architecture

No.	I.108	VS.1B.113	V.728	VS.1B.115	I.191
Date (Context)	LH II-III	LH II-III B	LH IIIA-B	LH II-III B	LH II-III A
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Mycenae	Aidonia	Mega Monastiri	Aidonia	Midea
Exact Find-Spot	Tomb 71?	Gournospilia cemetery, Tomb 7, pit	Tomb Γ, pit γ	Gournospilia cemetery, Tomb 7, pit	Tomb 10
Shape	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring	Ring
Material	Bimetallic (gold & silver)	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold
Class of Architecture	Entranceway topped with HoC	Entranceway topped with HoC	Two entranceways topped with HoC	Architectural complex: multiplied entranceways topped with HoC	Architectural complex topped with HoC
Direction the Women Face*	RRR ■	RR ■	■ RR ■	■ LFL ■	RR ■
Items Held	None	L-hand woman holds lily, R-hand woman holds papyrus flower	None	None	L-hand woman holds flower
Additional Indicators of Landscape	None	Rocks at base of entranceway, a lily & two papyrus flowers rise from paved groundline	Flower in front of R-hand entranceway & rocks at base	None	Birds within architecture, perhaps paving below

* R = right, L = left, F = frontal, ■ = architecture.

Table 8 Cont.

No.	VS.1B.114	I.313	I.86	V.422b	I.127
Date (Context)	LH II-III B	LH III B2	LH II-III	LH II-III	LH II-III A
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LH II-III A	LM I	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Aidonia	Pylos	Mycenae	Eleusis	Mycenae
Exact Find-Spot	Gournospilia cemetery, Tomb 7, pit	Palace, North-eastern Building, Room 98	Tomb 55	West Cemetery, Tomb Hπ3	Panagia Hill cemetery, Tomb 91, pit γ
Shape	Ring	Nodule (1, R)	Ring	Mould	Ring
Material	Gold	(M, bimetallic)	Gold	Steatite	Gold
Class of Architecture	Variation of a tree-shrine	Rectangular altar	Altar topped with HoC	Enclosed elongated boulders?	Entire architectural complex
Direction the Women Face	RRR ■	■ LLL	RRR ■	■ LF	R ■ L
Items Held	All women hold flowers	None	All women hold flowers/branches	None	None
Additional Indicators of Landscape	Tree in front of structure, smaller plant behind, rocks at base	Low pillar in front of last woman	Trefoil element to L, pedestal lamp between uprights	Curved line around architecture, plant motif to R and in the centre	Two branches, larger plant to R, bush(?) to L, horns(?) above

5.3 Single Standing Figures with Architecture

The second sub-group has eight examples: three hard stone lentoids, two soft stone lentoids, two gold rings, and one sealing. Only three of these artefacts have secure provenances: two were discovered on the mainland and one derives from Knossos. A further three artefacts were found on Crete but cannot be associated with a particular site with certainty. The group has five Minoan precursors, including three seal-types attested in the LM I deposits. In the majority of examples the structures appear to be of smaller size relative to the standing figures compared to those in the previous sub-group. Two new classes of architecture appear in this sub-group: the incurved altar topped with horns of consecration and the tree-shrine. Men appear twice in this sub-group.

5.3.1 Single Figure with an Entranceway

The only sealing in this sub-group is the fragmentary II.8.272. It was discovered at Knossos but the details of its find-spot have been lost. The standing figure is male and he wears a short kilt. The top of the sealing has broken away but, from the figure's proximity to the structure, it is probable that his out-stretched arms originally touched it. The structure consists of two uprights and a lintel upon which sit two pairs of horns of consecration. This structure is almost identical to those on VS.1B.113 and V.728 in the previous sub-group, indicating that an entranceway rather than an altar is represented. II.8.272 could perhaps be an abbreviated version, with only one figure, of the processions depicted on these rings (Wedde, 2004: 162). This also suggests a date of LM II-III A for the manufacture of the ring that impressed the sealing.

Behind the man is a figure-of-eight shield depicted *en face* that appears to hover just above the ground. I have observed elsewhere in this thesis that figure-of-eight

shields were sometimes added as fillers, usually in scenes depicting animals, where the shields are relatively small.²⁹⁰ The shield on II.8.272, however, is much larger relative to the standing figure. It is also more detailed than the ‘fillers’, so it can more accurately be described as a realistic representation of the shield itself.

Marinatos (1986: 54) proposes that the figure-of-eight shield on II.8.272 is to be understood as being hung from a wall. The existence of such a practice in reality is suggested by the LM II frieze of life-size figure-of-eight shields from the Grand Staircase in the palace at Knossos, which have persuasively been explained as representations of shields hung upon the walls (Evans, 1930: 307; Cameron, 1975: 84, 141-142). Similar friezes of figure-of-eight shields have been discovered upon the walls of the palace at Tiryns and in the South-west Building at Mycenae, reinforcing the palatial connection (Cameron, 1975: 84).²⁹¹ It is likely, therefore, that the scene on II.8.272 represents a part of the palace, probably that at Knossos (based on the sealing’s provenance), where either figure-of-eight shields were hung upon the walls or where a frieze of them was depicted, or both (Marinatos, 1995: 46). This supports the theory expounded in the previous section that certain buildings represent entranceways to a palatial complex.

5.3.2 Single Figures with Rectangular Altars

I.279 is a lentoid from Routsí. The architecture is of the low, rectangular form and is decorated with horizontal bands that give the impression that it is made of wood. A single, large pair of horns of consecration rests upon it, which designates it an altar.

²⁹⁰ See 1.4.3.21.4.3.5 and 3.2.4.

²⁹¹ An additional parallel is offered by I.132 from Mycenae, which depicts three women walking in procession with two upright figure-of-eight shields seemingly floating in the field. They are slightly smaller in scale than that on II.8.272 but they have similar detailing around their edges and they too could refer to figure-of-eight shields that are hanging upon the walls of a building (Marinatos, 1986: 54).

Two branches rise from between the horns. It is likely that the branches have been placed on the altar as offerings. Branches are associated with horns of consecration in the Neopalatial Period, as on the LM I Zakros Sanctuary Rhyton, but there they lie across the horns, whereas the branches on I.279 and the examples below rise up vertically. In this they recall the central branches on the LM/LH I-II lentoid I.231, discussed in **3.3.1**, which also rise vertically from between horns of consecration. The branches on I.127, discussed above, are also vertically positioned, but the horns of consecration are absent.²⁹² It is possible that, through the association between branches and horns of consecration, by LM/LH II-IIIa the former came to serve the same function as the latter; in other words, branches could mark cult space. This explains their appearance independently of the horns of consecration on the Tiryns Daemon Ring and on I.127 above.

The woman on I.279 appears to be about to place some lilies upon the altar. This scene, therefore, represents the conclusion of the processions with flowers, some of which are lilies, depicted upon I.191, VS.1B.113, and VS.1B.114 (Wedde, 2004: 174 n.148). Marinatos (1993: 151-152) reasons that, as the woman on I.279 is clearly enjoying smelling the lilies, indicated by her closed eyes, she must be the goddess to whom the flowers and altar belong. However, the theory that the smelling of flowers upon an altar is a divine prerogative is flawed, as reality states otherwise. The woman on I.279, like those depicted carrying flowers in procession, is to be interpreted as a votary or priestess (Niemeier, 1989: 169). Marinatos (1993: 151-152) ascribes a Minoan origin to this seal. However, the closest parallels for women holding lilies are VS.1B.113 above and the Great Goddess Ring, both of which are of mainland origin.

²⁹² It is interesting to note in this regard that three-dimensional horns of consecration have been discovered that have a socket into which a branch could have been inserted, which would then have stood upright (Gesell, 1985: 92). Some examples were cited in **2.3.2**.

This lentoid can therefore be dated to LM/LH II.

On the soft stone lentoid IX.163, attributed to Ligortyno in Central Crete, the engraving is worn, hampering the interpretation of the scene. A plant rises from a low structure. Nilsson (1950: 182) suggests that the vertical line at the right of the structure is an abbreviated, single horn of consecration. It is more likely that the second half of the pair was originally depicted in the expected place at the other side of the altar; as it was in the centre of the seal it wore away more quickly than the edges of the scene. Below, or within, the altar is a crescent-shaped object that is probably a garland (Marinatos, 1989: 131). The ring I.126 from Mycenae provides the clearest parallel: two garlands hang within the second compartment of the left-hand altar (Furumark, 1988: 72).

Evans (1901: 184-185) suggested that the plant on the altar on IX.163 is a tree that is contained within a wooden construction. Marinatos (1989: 139; 1993: 183) argues that tree containers existed in reality and that they were portable, being added to or removed from cult structures as necessary, perhaps correlating with the believed presence of a deity. In support of this theory, Marinatos (1993: 183) cites two Neopalatial artefacts that purportedly depict the transportation of the tree in progress, which are the amygdaloid VS.1A.55 from a LM IB context at Makrigialos and the Mochlos Ring, discussed in 4.2.4. The former depicts a woman standing in a boat with one hand raised to her face in a similar manner to the figure on VS.1A.75 below. A tree, identified as a palm by Sourvinou-Inwood (1989b: 97), is shown next to the ship's cabin, which consists of hatching. The fact that the woman on VA.1A.55 is standing, combined with the gesture that she targets at the structure, designates her a mortal (Marinatos, 1989: 132; *contra* Niemeier, 1989: 183). On the Mochlos Ring, a goddess is

seated within a boat that also contains a stepped structure topped with a tree.

The main flaw in Marinatos' (1993: 183) interpretation of these two artefacts as depicting the transportation of a tree is that it is highly unlikely that either scene was inspired by the witnessing of a real ritual. In 4.2.4 I emphasised that the scene on the Mochlos Ring is clearly imaginary and VS.1A.55 can be viewed in the same way, as Sourvinou-Inwood (1989a: 99) reasons.²⁹³ It is likely that VS.1A.55 is related to the contemporary talismanic amygdaloids that depict ships with large cabins, some of which are very ornate;²⁹⁴ its shape supports such a link (Wedde, 2004: 179).²⁹⁵ As the scenes upon VS.1A.55 and the Mochlos Rings are both imaginary, neither require the creation of a theory involving the real transportation of architecture and a tree in a boat.²⁹⁶ Returning to the structure on IX.163, the possibility that it is made out of wood is insufficient to demonstrate that it is portable. Similarly, none of the other architecture that Marinatos (1989: 138-139) identifies as being portable, such as that on I.119, possesses any clear indications of such portability. Finally, comparison with I.279 above suggests that the vegetation on IX.163 is not a tree but a branch that has been placed between the horns of consecration.

²⁹³ There is no need to argue that the structure on the Mochlos Ring is standing upon the shore behind the boat, *contra* Persson (1942b: 83) and Nilsson (1950: 269).

²⁹⁴ Examples include VI.206, attributed to Knossos, and VI.205, VII.104, IX.117, X.227, and XI.89, which are all unprovenanced. A parallel for standing figures within a boat on a talismanic amygdaloid is provided by IS.167, which is unprovenanced but stylistically dates to LM I. The engraver of this seal has mistakenly engraved part of the cabin *below* the boat's hull.

²⁹⁵ The only other instance of a boat in a secure cult context in glyptic appears upon the Kandia Ring, which depicts the deity's epiphany. The role of the boat is unclear. Instead of being occupied by single women, it is crewed by several figures. Similarly, the significance of the boat-scene on the gold ring I.180 from Tiryns is obscure. It may be linked to a now untraceable mythological narrative (Tamvaki, 1989: 272), although it does not contain any secure indicators of possessing a religious nature.

²⁹⁶ The transportation of cult architecture in a boat is a theme that appears in the Near East. A cylinder from Uruk dating to the early third millennium depicts a male figure being transported in a boat that also contains two structures, one of which appears upon a bull's back (Collon, 1987: 174, no.807).

5.3.3 Single Figures with Incurved Altars

VS.1A.75 (fig.17) is an agate lentoid attributed to Knossos. A woman raises her hand to her head in a salute in a similar manner to the central woman on I.108 in the previous sub-group. The architecture is iconographically very simple: horns of consecration sit upon an incurved altar. The incurved altar was discussed in 3.4, where it was ascertained that it served as a base for items of cult or symbolic importance, here horns of consecration. On the left, a tall palm bends over the structure. This is the only example of the palm in this motif-group and it was discussed in more detail in 3.3.3. Here it probably serves as a marker of cult space (Marinatos, 1989: 122).

The architecture on the rock crystal lentoid II.3.7, attributed to the Idaean Cave, is of the same basic form as that on VS.1A.75. A single pair of horns of consecration rests upon an incurved altar, but here three small branches also rise from it. The resemblance to the branches on the Tiryns Daemon Ring and I.127 is very clear, indicating a post-LM IB date for II.3.7. The altar is flanked by a star-shaped item and a strange object that is interpreted by Goodison (1989: 89-90) as a figurine. These items cannot be clearly identified, but the context suggests that they are offerings. Behind the woman is a plant of a slightly different form to the branches on the altar, which could be an abbreviated rendering of a tree (Evans, 1901: 142).

The woman on II.3.7 raises a conch shell to her face, which Evans (1901: 141-142) viewed as evidence for the use of such shells in religious rituals, perhaps to summon a deity.²⁹⁷ Baurain & Darcque (1983: 55), however, note that the end of the shell on II.3.7 does not touch the figure's mouth and, additionally, this end does not appear to be pierced, so it could not have produced a sound. In their analysis of the

²⁹⁷ Evans (1921: 221, 580-581) reports that the remains of conch shell 'trumpets' were discovered at Phaistos and in a shrine at Knossos.

steatite triton shell discovered at Mallia, Baurain & Darcque (1983: 56-58) conclude that the principal use of this object was as a libation vessel, which is supported by the fact that a libation scene involving two daemons was engraved upon the object itself.²⁹⁸ This raises the possibility that the shell depicted upon II.3.7 is likewise a libation vessel, a theory accepted by Niemeier (1989: 169) and Marinatos (1993: 199), who argue that the figure is performing a pouring gesture. The closest LBA parallel is provided by the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus: the scene on the front depicts liquids being poured into a krater between two double axes erected on stands (Long, 1974: 35, pl.6).

5.3.4 Single Figures with Tree-Shrines

The next example is an unprovenanced slate lentoid, XII.264. The figure does not wear a flounced skirt or have clearly rendered breasts but the large thighs suggest that the figure is female (Younger, 1983: 123; *contra* Niemeier, 1989: 177). A large plant apparently sprouts from a structure consisting of two uprights and a lintel. This plant is clearly a tree and not a branch, in contrast to the previous examples, as the woman is able to pull upon it quite violently: she raises both hands to grasp the tree and kicks up her heels. This recalls the scenes of tree-grasping performed to invoke the deity's epiphany. The closest correspondence to this figure occurs upon the Archanes Ring: the left-hand figure has an identical pose to that on XII.264, although the structure on that ring is of a tripartite form. This ritual is also performed on II.3.114 from Kalyvia, which is significant because it is the only other known attestation of a woman grasping a tree in this manner.

The structure on XII.264 is not a typical tree-shrine as it rests upon an unclear

²⁹⁸ This scene is described in 3.2.2.

object that could be a continuation of the tree's trunk, or, alternatively, a type of base. Nonetheless, the strong correlation between the figure's actions and those depicted in scenes of epiphany-conjuring rituals indicates that XII.264 also illustrates such a ritual, as Niemeier (1989: 177) proposes. The structure should therefore be considered a tree-shrine, which sets XII.264 apart from the other examples discussed thus far in this sub-group, which, to emphasise the point, depict branches or other vegetation that has been placed upon the architecture, not trees. This could suggest that XII.264 was engraved in the Neopalatial Period (Younger, 1983: 123), as depictions of the epiphany-conjuring rituals were generally restricted to that period (Niemeier, 1990: 169-170). However, without any details of the seal's provenance, it is perhaps wiser to simply state that it was heavily inspired by Neopalatial iconography.

The next example is the gold ring I.119 from Mycenae, which depicts a standing man accompanied by a goat. It is discussed in **6.3.4** in relation to the sacrificial ritual but its inclusion in this sub-group is justified by the fact that the architecture next to the man is similar in appearance to that on XII.264 above. It consists of two uprights and a lintel, from which rises a tree. Furumark (1988: 73) and K. Galanakis (2005: 107), therefore, connect this scene with epiphany-conjuring rituals. However, the man only lightly touches the tree; he does not grasp it in the manner associated with such rituals, as on XII.264.

Moreover, the architecture on I.119 differs from Neopalatial tree-shrines, such as those depicted upon the Archanes and Poros Rings, in the fact that the tree's trunk can clearly be seen between the structure's uprights, whereas in the Minoan examples the tree was typically completely enclosed. It is possible that the mainland engraver of I.119 misunderstood the nature of the Minoan tree-shrine and illustrated the trunk in

order to rationalise the scene. I.126, also from Mycenae, provides a parallel for a mainland variation of aspects derived from the epiphany-conjuring rituals (Niemeier, 1990: 170). In **6.3.4** I accept Burkert's (1985: 136-138) suggestion that the goat on I.119 is being offered as a sacrifice, meaning that it can be compared with the flower offerings carried by the women on the rings in the first sub-group, such as I.86. Further comparison with this ring in particular is encouraged by the presence of the trefoil element that rises from behind the goat's back on I.119, which provides another instance of this element's connection with Mycenae.

The final example in this sub-group is the gold ring VI.279, attributed to Mycenae (fig.18), which depicts a woman standing between architecture and a tree. She raises one hand towards the former but her feet and lower body are directed toward the tree. The field is filled with curved lines similar to that on V.422b above: one encloses the woman and another the tree, which floats atop further lines that meet to form an arch. These lines are probably decorative and enhance the symbolic, as opposed to realistic, nature of the scene.

The architecture on VI.279 consists of two uprights and a lintel, with rocks depicted at its base. Nilsson (1950: 181) interprets it as a large building. However, it is topped with only a single pair of horns of consecration that is nearly the width of the lintel, which suggests that it is a small altar like that on I.86. Through comparison with the architecture on this ring, the dot between the supporting uprights on VI.279 could be explained as the top of a columnar object, perhaps a pedestal lamp, which has been rendered in a more reduced manner. The second factor that indicates that an altar and not a building is represented is the curved line that sprouts from between the horns; this is probably a shorthand rendering of a branch, as Nilsson (1950: 180) suggests, by

analogy with the examples discussed below. Similar fronds appear at the structure's base.

The structure on VI.279 recalls the tree-shrine depicted on the Minoan precursor II.6.1, described in 5.2.5, which likewise has a plant depicted at its base. The resemblance between the two scenes is strengthened by the presence on VI.279 of an identical tree to that which rises from the shrine on II.6.1. The tree on the former appears on the opposite side of the iconographic field to the altar, perhaps in order to balance the scene (Sourvinou-Inwood, 1990: 198). It is possible that, like the architecture on I.119 discussed above, the altar on VI.279 was inspired by the iconography of tree-shrines. The tree itself, however, was separated from the architecture as the tree-shrine was not regarded as an item of cult apparatus on the LH mainland, a region divorced temporally and geographically from the epiphany-conjuring rituals for which the tree-shrine was originally designed.

5.3.5 Minoan Precursors

This sub-group has five Minoan precursors. II.6.3 is a seal-type from the Ayia Triadha deposit. It depicts a simply rendered woman standing beside a structure with both arms raised towards her face. The structure has a lintel but only one remaining upright. A crescent-shaped object with a tooth-like lower edge appears beneath the lintel, which can be identified as a garland (Furumark, 1988: 75). The structure is topped with two pairs of horns of consecration, which indicate that a building perhaps similar to those on I.108, VS.1B.113, V.728, and II.8.272 is represented. The inclusion of the garland does not negate this interpretation as garlands were sometimes painted upon the walls of buildings, as is demonstrated by the Fresco of the Garlands from the North

House at Knossos (Warren, 1985: 190-207). Two very similar structures are represented upon a fragment of an ivory pyxis, also from Ayia Triadha: they are topped with multiple pairs of horns of consecration and are likewise adorned with garlands (HM 58; Halbherr et al., 1977: 97, figs.64, 65). The clearest indication that these are buildings is the fact that they are taller than the two women with whom they are depicted. The structure on II.6.3, therefore, can securely be interpreted as a building. The incomplete nature of the seal-type makes it difficult to discern if the building was an entranceway, but it does demonstrate that, as in later periods, single figures could be depicted standing before a building.

I.410 was excavated in a LC I context at Phylakopi on the island of Melos. It is the only ring discussed in this thesis that is made of a soft material, which is either ivory or dentine. The style is very different to those of the other artefacts in this sub-group, being more geometric; this style was probably dictated by the material. A woman stands before horns of consecration that are resting upon a low structure made up of three compartments. Below are several lines that curve around the edge of the field in a manner reminiscent of the trunk or structure base on XII.264 above. The woman reaches to touch the vegetation that appears between the horns. A leafier plant consisting of three fronds sits behind her. Niemeier (1989: 169) states that the woman is placing a branch upon the altar, which parallels the scene on I.279 and indicates how the branches frequently depicted upon the altar came to be resting there. I.410 also suggests that this ritual originated in the Neopalatial Period, although in the later scenes flowers are more frequently represented than branches.

The next three scenes all depict women standing next to architecture topped with trees. These are the sealing II.6.2 from Ayia Triadha, the bronze ring II.3.15, and the

seal-type VS.1A.176 from a MM III-LM I context at Khania. The ring was excavated in a debris layer in Hogarth's House A at Knossos, which was abandoned or destroyed in LM IA (Driessen & Macdonald, 1997: 28), thus providing a *terminus post quem non* for II.3.15's manufacture. The women all face the architecture, raising one arm and lowering the other, although their exact gestures are slightly different. The gesture of the woman on II.6.2 closely matches those of the women on I.191 above, suggesting she is dancing. In contrast, the women on II.3.15 and VS.1A.176 raise one hand closer to their face and they reach out with the other to touch the architecture; they do not appear to be dancing. A discussion of the status of the women is postponed until the completion of an analysis of the architecture and additional iconographic elements.

Only parts of the lintel and one supporting post remain of the structure on II.6.2; two bush-like shapes to the left of the lintel presumably belonged to a tree that sat upon it. This suggests that a tree-shrine was originally represented, rather than a larger building. Several rocks perhaps appear at its base; the Vapheio Ring provides a parallel for the depiction of rocks in association with a tree rising from a low structure. Between the woman and the structure are two round objects with fronds sprouting from their tops. The leading interpretation of these elements is provided by Warren (1990: 200-201), who identifies them as squills. This identification is not entirely satisfactory but I shall retain this term in order to differentiate them from the frond-less boulders. It is necessary to discuss briefly the theories that have been proposed regarding their function in order to ascertain the meaning of the scene depicted upon II.6.2.

The key debate regards the squills' relationship with the boulders, that is, whether they could also be used in epiphany-conjuring rituals. In addition to those on II.6.2, squills appear three more times in glyptic, in each instance on an artefact dated to

LM I. In two of these scenes they appear at the edge of the field and are not touched or otherwise interacted with by the figures.²⁹⁹ Only one known example depicts the squills being leant upon in the same manner as the boulders of the epiphany-conjuring rituals: the gold ring VI.278, allegedly from Khania.³⁰⁰ Warren (1990: 200) argues that this demonstrates that the squills served a similar function to the boulders, perhaps connected with fertility rituals. Niemeier (1989: 179), however, rightly points out that in reality squills would have been far too small to have been leaned upon like the boulder; he views this discrepancy in size sufficient to cast doubts upon the authenticity of VI.278.³⁰¹

A similarly ambiguous element appears upon II.3.15. Behind the woman on this ring is an oblong object sitting on its end with a projecting upper rim, which is read by Marinatos (1989: 131) as a pithos. This element, like the squills, was a phenomenon of LM I glyptic and it appears four more times, always in scenes connected with epiphany-conjuring rituals. On the Vapheio Ring it is illustrated in exactly the same position in the iconographic field as that on II.3.15, but it has a tree rising from it, which is grasped by a standing male. On the Kandia Ring and II.3.114 from Kalyvia the element is ignored, as on II.3.15, merely providing an iconographic backdrop for the main scene. The most informative appearance of this element is on the Sellopoulo Ring, where it clearly has a line vertically bisecting it and so cannot be interpreted as a pithos (Niemeier, 1989: 174-175; Warren, 1990: 195). Niemeier (1989: 174-175) and Warren (1990: 195) persuasively argue, therefore, that this negates the interpretation of the

²⁹⁹ On the Mochlos Ring the squills seem to float to the left of the boat, whereas on the seal-type VS.1A.180 from Khania they are shown in single form, this time accompanying a male and a female figure standing next to a pillar.

³⁰⁰ Nilsson (1950: 342-343) incorrectly identifies the objects on this ring as jars, misreading the leaning woman's hand and arms as a rim and handle.

³⁰¹ VI.278 has also been denounced as a forgery by Kenna (1960: 154) and Biesantz (1954: 115-119). It is adequately defended by Sourvinou-Inwood (1971: 62-69) on stylistic grounds, but she does not address the issue of the lack of parallels for the squills being leant upon.

objects on II.3.15, II.3.114, and the Vapheio and Kandia Rings as pithoi, alternatively identifying them as elongated boulders, which were sometimes enclosed within a small structure, as on the Vapheio Ring. V.422b may provide an additional parallel for enclosed elongated boulders.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine the exact role of the squills and elongated boulders, but the evidence suggests that they are largely interchangeable. Both are closely associated with religious scenes including rituals performed to induce an epiphany, as on VI.278 and the Vapheio Ring. More frequently, they are not interacted with; the elongated boulder on II.3.15 appears in exactly the same position as the squills on VS.1A.180. In these instances they serve as cult markers, denoting the sacred space in which the religious rituals were performed (Wedde, 1992: 195).

Returning to II.3.15, the structure consists of ashlar masonry that continues beyond the field of the ring. It closely parallels the tree-shrine on the Poros Ring, which is likewise ashlar, suggesting that the architecture on II.3.15 is also a tree-shrine that is to be used to summon a deity (Marinatos, 1993: 187-188).

On VS.1A.176, the architecture takes the form of the stepped structure that was encountered in Chapter 4 as the seat of a goddess. In these scenes it is sometimes topped with horns of consecration,³⁰² whereas on VS.1A.176 it is topped with a tree. The stepped structure, like the tree-shrine above, was utilised in epiphany-conjuring rituals. It appears on the right on II.7.1 from the LM IB Zakros sealing deposit, where it is topped with a tree. A man stands beside it, turning away to look towards a floating figure. It is likely that this figure has been summoned by the man, who has grasped the tree that tops the stepped structure. The same structure again appears with floating

³⁰² It is topped with horns of consecration on V.199 and II.8.268; on VS.1A.177 it is perhaps bare. Additionally, on the Ring of Minos the stepped structure on the left is topped with horns of consecration, whereas a tree rises from that on the right.

figures on the ivory lid from Mochlos (referred to in **4.2.1**) and on the Ring of Minos. In both instances a larger goddess sits upon the structure. On the latter artefact the stepped structure is depicted a second time; the woman on the right touches the tree that appears at the top of the structure, presumably in order to invoke the deity's presence.³⁰³

Turning to the status of the standing women, Niemeier (1989: 181) interprets those on II.3.15 and VS.1A.176 as goddesses, arguing that they appear to be in the act of turning away from the architecture. However, I prefer to read these women and that on II.6.2 as mortals as there are no potential criteria of divinity present. The woman on II.6.2 is perhaps dancing in order to summon the deity's presence and those on II.3.15 and VS.1A.176 could be about to grasp the tree to achieve the same end (Marinatos, 1993: 187-188). Marinatos (1993: 187-188) reasonably suggests that, once the goddess is deemed to be present, the women will impersonate her in an enacted epiphany ritual.³⁰⁴ The connection between these scenes and epiphany-conjuring rituals is justified on account of the inclusion of architecture used in such rituals, in addition to the presence of the elongated boulders and squills.

Considering the different classes of architecture, incurved altars are the only type not attested in the Minoan precursors of either motif, although such altars do occur elsewhere in iconography in LM I. They are depicted between animals on two seal-types from the LM IB sealing deposits and on the Zakros Sanctuary Rhyton, for

³⁰³ A more tentative example of the stepped structure in conjunction with a small floating figure appears upon the gold ring VS.2.106 from Elateia-Alonaki. A standing woman in a flounced skirt raises her left arm to greet the figure, behind whom are two full-sized standing males. That on the left wears a hide skirt and perhaps carries a garment; in this he provides a close match to the right-hand figure on the Ayia Triadha seal-type II.6.11, which supports the dating of VS.2.106 to LM I. On the right, at the very edge of the scene, are four small steps, which rise only to the height of the standing figures' knees. It is possible that this element alludes to the stepped structure, but its incredibly small size relative to the standing figures precludes a firm identification.

³⁰⁴ A similar interpretation can be proposed regarding the woman on the Ring of Minos who is grasping a tree while kneeling upon the stepped structure from which it rises: she may be about to impersonate the deity that she is in the process of summoning.

example.³⁰⁵ Shaw's (1978: 436, fig.9) reconstruction of the architecture on this vessel indicates that the walls of the sanctuary enclosed an incurved altar in addition to a rectangular altar and a stepped structure, demonstrating the contemporaneity of these three different architectural classes. None of the incurved altars in these representations are topped with horns of consecration, in contrast to the later examples. II.3.7 and VS.1A.75 are in fact the only examples in glyptic of horns of consecration that appear upon an incurved altar. Both are attributed to Crete, suggesting that this combination of elements was a Cretan, post-LM IB phenomenon.

Finally, regarding landscape, in this sub-group only II.8.272 contains clear allusions to a palatial setting. The other scenes sometimes include floral elements or trees, but generally there are few indications of the landscape. The rituals depicted could potentially have been set in a palace, a rural sanctuary, or in the open air.

³⁰⁵ The incurved altars on II.6.74 from Ayia Triadha and II.7.73 from Zakros are flanked by animals. These seal-types are described in **3.4.3**.

Table 9: Provenanced Examples of Single Figures with Architecture

No.	II.8.272	I.279	I.119
Date (Context)	Unknown	LH IIA-III A1	LH II-III
Date (Stylistic)	LM II-III A	LM/LH II	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Knossos	Routsi	Mycenae
Exact Find-Spot	Unknown	Tholos 2	Tomb 84
Shape	Combination sealing (1, R)	L	Ring
Material	(M)	Carnelian	Gold
Class of Architecture	Entranceway topped with HoC	Rectangular altar, possibly wooden, topped with HoC	Variation of a tree-shrine
Gender of Figure	Male	Female	Male
Figure's Relationship with Architecture	Both hands raised towards entranceway	Placing lilies on altar	Left hand raised to architecture
Additional Elements	Figure-of-eight shield on opposite side of field to entranceway	Branches rising from HoC	Goat, trefoil element, rocks at base of architecture

5.4 Find Contexts

The high proportion of provenanced examples in the sub-group of multiple figures with architecture offers a unique opportunity to examine the artefacts' find contexts. Detailed information regarding the burial assemblages is available for the three rings from Aidonia (VS.1B.113, VS.1B.114, and VS.1B.115), which were associated with two female burials discovered in a small shaft (Krystalli-Votsi, 1989: 34-37). Similarly, I.191 from Midea was associated with what the excavator termed 'a woman's parure', which included necklaces of gold beads and rosettes from a girdle (Persson, 1942a: 75-81). V.728 was not clearly associated with any skeletal remains but the tomb contained rich offerings, including gold jewellery in the shape of rosettes and carnelian beads (Pini, 1975: 585-586). It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that these rings were owned and worn by women, who perhaps took part in the rituals depicted (Laffineur, 2000: 167). These rituals include the procession (on VS.1B.113, VS.1B.114, and V.728) and dancing (on I.191 and VS.1B.115).

The motif of multiple figures with architecture is the only motif discussed in this thesis that is associated with only one medium, here metal rings, all the physical examples of which are made of gold. The combination of this high status medium with the fact that most of the rings were deposited in rich tombs establishes a potential connection with the elite. This association is reinforced by the fact that most of the rings cited above potentially represent rituals as taking place within palatial contexts; these scenes are probably based in reality. German (2005: 85-96), therefore, reasonably suggests that both dancing and the procession were connected with the palatial elite, although I disagree that such motifs were employed as a method of palatial control. Moreover, this connection is only evident for examples in this sub-group. Accepting

that these rings were worn by women, they could thus have served as a symbol of the owners' entitlement to participate, or to continue to participate, in the rituals depicted, thus affirming their links with the palatial elite (German, 2005: 17, 95). This idea is appraised in the Conclusion, in combination with the evidence provided by the analyses of the other motif-groups.

The theory that some artefacts depict rituals in which their owner participated cannot as readily be applied to I.279, which is from the second Routsí tholos. It was found cupped in the hands of a male individual with eleven other seals, as Rehak & Younger (2000: 259) note. None of the other seals bear motifs of an obviously religious nature. An analysis of the phenomenon of multiple seals discovered in association with a single burial is postponed to 6.5, where it is discussed in relation to the seals from the Vapheio cist.

I.127 from Mycenae was discovered in a pit with three other gold rings, including I.128, which depicts a seated figure with a griffin, I.126, referred to in 5.2.5 and 5.3.2, and I.129, showing a single sphinx. The motifs on I.126, I.127, and I.128 all have Minoan precursors; however, the combination of elements on each ring is unique.³⁰⁶ This group provides one of the clearest examples encountered in this thesis of artefacts bearing scenes of religious significance deriving from the same burial context. The consequences of this are explored in the Conclusion.

5.5 Conclusions

At least three different rituals are depicted in the LM/LH II-III A examples of the motifs: dancing, the procession, and the deposition of offerings upon an altar. It is likely

³⁰⁶ The unique nature of the scene upon I.128 is outlined in 4.3.1.

that the representations of all three are based in reality. Dancing only occurs in scenes of multiple figures (on VS.1B.115 and I.191), and is combined with a procession on the latter; I suggest that the emphasis is upon the procession. Dancing is also only depicted in conjunction with complex architecture, often in paved areas, which refers to an urban, possibly palatial, setting.

Processions of multiple figures most frequently occur with simple entranceways. That these are entranceways to palatial structures specifically is supported by the presence of the figure-of-eight shield on II.8.272, which may represent an abbreviated version of a processional scene. The procession is associated with a wider range of architecture than the dance, as it also occurs with altars of different forms. In the latter scenes there are no clear indications of the environment in which the scene is set.

The third type of ritual, that of the deposition of offerings upon an altar, is restricted to the second sub-group. These offerings include branches, flowers, and libations. The fact that the former two types are shown being carried by women in procession suggests that an altar was the terminus of the procession. Some scenes with single figures could represent the conclusion of this ritual. However, the two motifs have different patterns of distribution, that with multiple figures being entirely restricted to the mainland, whereas that with single figures is attested on Crete, so the connections between the two motifs should not be over-emphasised. Moreover, few of the instances of single figures contain indications of landscape, making it difficult to ascertain if the altars should be regarded as being enclosed within a larger structure. The fact that vegetation such as plants and trees frequently occur perhaps points to a rural setting for some scenes.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁷ See 4.2.4 and 4.3.4 for potential indications that rituals involving stepped structures were performed outside.

Turning to the relationship between the motif of multiple figures with architecture and Minoan iconography, there are clear chronological differences in both the rituals and the architecture depicted. The changes in the depictions of rituals, and their consequences for religious practices, are outlined in more detail in the Conclusion, in combination with the evidence of the other chapters. The main point to emphasise is that the scenes of processions of women with architecture do not have a clear Minoan precedent. The Minoan precursors of the first motif instead depict standing figures, usually in conjunction with architecture associated with epiphany-conjuring rituals.

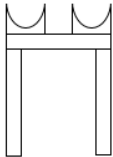
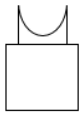
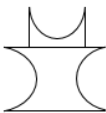
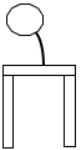

Regarding the classes of architecture, the rectangular altar is the only class that exhibits clear continuity. Despite not appearing in the Minoan precursors, the incurved altar is attested elsewhere in Neopalatial iconography. However, it is only depicted topped with horns of consecration after LM IB, although it continues to be closely associated with Crete. The entranceways, which most frequently occur with multiple figures in the later examples, were to some extent prefigured by the simple architecture upon the Minoan precursor II.6.3. The convention of depicting large architectural complexes in a reduced form was also utilised in LM I.

The stepped structure topped with a tree and the tree-shrine are almost entirely restricted to the Neopalatial Period. This discontinuity is not surprising as both were used in epiphany-conjuring rituals, the depiction of which declined after LM IB. This also explains why the elongated boulders and figure-of-eight shield enclosures are not attested after this point. The architecture on I.119, VI.279, and perhaps that on VS.1B.114 can be regarded as a variation of the iconography of the tree-shrine; it is unlikely that they represent real structures. The tree is increasingly separated from the architecture in the LM/LH II-III A examples and on VS.1A.75 it takes the form of a

palm, which does not occur in the Minoan precursors.

Regarding landscape, some aspects, such as the architecture (especially entranceways) and perhaps trees and paving, carry specific information regarding the setting of the scene in reality. Other elements, such as flowers and rocks, are more generic, included to locate the scene in the cult sphere. The extent of the connections between these motifs and reality is assessed in the Conclusion, after the analysis of the final motif-group.

Diagram of Five Classes of Architecture

Diagram	Name	Neopalatial Period			Later Crete and Mainland		
		Multiple Figures	Single Figures	Elsewhere in Thesis	Multiple Figures	Single Figures	Elsewhere in Thesis
	Entranceway. Usually has rocks at base		II.6.3	II.7.74 (no HoC) (5.2.2)	I.108 I.191 (variation) V.728 VS.1B.113 VS.1B.115	II.8.272	
	Rectangular altar & HoC		I.410		I.313 (no HoC)	I.279 IX.163	
	Incurved altar & HoC			II.6.74 (without HoC) II.7.73 (without HoC) (3.4.3)		II.3.7 VS.1A.75	All without HoC: I.73 (3.4.1) I.46 II.8.326 XI.176 (3.4.2)
	Tree-shrine	II.6.1	II.3.15 II.6.2	XI.28 (variation) (4.2.1)	VS.1B.114 (variation)	I.119 (variation) VI.279 (variation) XII.264	
	Stepped structure. Can be topped with HoC or tree		VS.1A.176 (tree)	II.3.252 (tree) II.7.8 II.8.268 (HoC) VS.1A.177 (4.2.4)			I.123 (3.3.2) V.199 (HoC) (4.2.1)

CHAPTER 6. MOTIFS RELATING TO ANIMAL SACRIFICE

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Outline of the Motif-Group

This chapter analyses motifs that relate to the theme of animal sacrifice. These are principally the motifs of herbivores lying or standing upon a table and of women carrying herbivores. In both instances I interpret the animals as sacrificial victims. The epigraphic and archaeological evidence outlined below confirms that animal sacrifice was a religious ritual that was performed in reality.

The first motif analysed in this chapter depicts animals lying or standing upon a table. There are fourteen examples in this sub-group, four of which are sealings, and it has no Minoan precursors. Ten of the artefacts have secure provenances, which are distributed between the mainland and Crete. The second motif depicts women carrying herbivores. I follow Sakellarakis (1972: 245-258) in regarding these women as priestesses carrying a sacrificial animal. Justification for this is provided in 0. This sub-group consists of nineteen examples, only one of which is a sealing, and it has five secure Minoan precursors. Less than half of the sub-group is provenanced and it appears only five times on the mainland.

The first aim of this chapter is to clarify the extent to which the glyptic evidence can be utilised to reconstruct specific details of sacrificial rituals, particularly the roles of men and women, and the species of animals that were considered sacrificial. The only species depicted lying upon tables are bulls and pigs, whereas goats and rams are the only animals carried by the women. This allows the chapter to be organised by both motif and species, although it is not possible to distinguish between goats and rams. The

analysis of the appearances of each species in either of the two core motifs is supplemented with attestations of that species in potentially sacrificial contexts elsewhere in glyptic. Having outlined the two core motifs, and others that may potentially relate to the sacrifice of bulls, pigs, sheep, and goats, I critically appraise the iconographic evidence that deer and lions were sacrificed in the LBA Aegean. The additional glyptic evidence, beyond the two core motifs, is also utilised in an attempt to ascertain the different roles of men and women in the sacrificial ritual.

The second aim of this chapter is to outline and attempt to account for the diachronic changes that occurred in the representation of animal sacrifice from the Neopalatial Period to later periods, on both Crete and the mainland. None of the depictions of animals upon a table can be dated earlier than LM/LH II, whereas the motif of women carrying goats or rams is widely attested in the Neopalatial Period, as will become clear. This analysis will include a brief overview of the materials associated with the motifs and their distribution, although a thorough comparative analysis is postponed until the Conclusion. I also outline some of the contexts in which artefacts bearing relevant motifs have been found, which necessitates a brief discussion of the deposition of seals at sanctuaries as well as ‘collections’ of seals. This can potentially shed further light on the possible functions of the motifs.

6.1.2 Epigraphic and Archaeological Evidence for Sacrifice: Overview

This section is not intended to provide a comprehensive catalogue of the evidence for animal sacrifice. It simply presents sufficient epigraphic and archaeological information to establish, firstly, which species were sacrificed and, secondly, the nature of the probable sacrificial implements utilised. This evidence is

biased in favour of LH IIIB and so post-dates the majority of the glyptic evidence but broad continuity can be assumed.

The Linear B records from Knossos and Thebes contain references to sacrificial animals that include religious terms to describe them, demonstrating the connection with cult.³⁰⁸ Regarding specific species, the Wu series of nodules from Thebes records the receipt by the palatial centre of forty-seven animals that were destined for a sacrificial banquet, including (in descending order of prominence) sheep, goats, pigs, and bovines (Piteros et al., 1990: 112-184; Nikoloudis, 2001: 12-13; Palaima, 2004: 222-223).³⁰⁹

This correlates with the archaeological evidence, as six deposits of burnt animal bones, mostly belonging to bovines and dating to approximately LH IIIB, were found in the palace at Pylos (Blegen & Rawson, 1966: 92). The cut-marks, together with the presence of bones that do not carry much meat, which were found in uncharred earth, suggest that these animals were ritually slaughtered before having their flesh removed and their bones burnt (Isaakidou et al., 2002: 88; Stocker & Davis, 2004: 182, 190).

A second significant assemblage derives from Room A of the LH IIIA-B sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos on the Methana peninsula. The zooarchaeological remains were found in the hearth or nearby and comprise mostly pig bones, which Hamilakis & Konsolaki (2004: 141-144) argue represent the remains of sacrificial offerings. That this room had a cultic function is confirmed by the discovery of approximately one-hundred-and-fifty terracotta theriomorphic and anthropomorphic

³⁰⁸ Tablet C (2) 941+1016+fr. from Knossos refers to animals designated *sa-pa-ke-te-ri-ja*, that is, 'animals for ritual slaughter' (Killen, 1994: 73-76; Nikoloudis, 2001: 15). Similarly, the nodules from Thebes that list animals provided for a sacrificial banquet include religious terms such as *i-je-ra* on Wu44 and *i-je-ro* on Wu86 and 87 (Palaima, 1992: 465).

³⁰⁹ At Pylos, tablet Un138 records fifty-three animals of similar types, also interpreted as sacrificial victims (Piteros et al., 1990: 172, 180-184; Palaima, 2004: 223).

figurines (Hamilakis & Konsolaki, 2004: 136-137). Additional deposits of animal bones that are potentially the remains of sacrifices, from sites including the Cult Centre at Mycenae (Mylonas, 1981: 313), Tholos A at Archanes (Sakellarakis, 1965: 179; Y. & E. Sakellarakis, 1997: 165, 264-265), and Phylakopi (Renfrew, 1985: 388, 479-483), confirm that goats, sheep, pigs, and bovines were ritually slaughtered in the LBA Aegean.

I noted above that the bones from the Pylos deposits were burnt; the majority of the bones discovered at Ayios Konstantinos were likewise burnt, including those that carried no meat, thus excluding the possibility that they were cooked purely for culinary purposes (Hamilakis & Konsolaki, 2004: 143-144). Hamilakis & Konsolaki (2004: 144), therefore, conclude that the bones were deliberately burnt as part of a sacrificial offering. Gallou (2005: 86) similarly reasons that this deposit, like those at Pylos, provides proof for the performance of burnt animal sacrifices in the LBA Aegean, a notion that had previously been denied by Bergquist (1988: 21-34). Whittaker (2008: 185-188), however, cautions that the bones from Pylos, as well as those from Ayios Konstantinos, could represent waste from food preparation or consumption, the bones being burnt as a means of disposal, with no symbolic significance present. She emphasises that there is not yet any undeniable evidence for the practice of burnt animal sacrifice in the LBA Aegean (Whittaker, 2008: 188; also Nikoloudis, 2001: 20).³¹⁰

Turning to the implements of sacrifice, the Ta series from Pylos provides information regarding the sacrificial and feasting equipment inventoried upon the appointment of a new official.³¹¹ The tablets include a reference to two sharp knives and

³¹⁰ Similarly, Hägg (1998: 183) stresses that the presence of burnt animal bones in a ritual context alone is insufficient to demonstrate that burnt animal sacrifice had been carried out.

³¹¹ Ta711 (the first tablet in the series) is headed: 'Thus [the scribe] saw when the *wanax* appointed Augewas as *da-mo-ko-ro*' (Killen, 1998: 441).

two ‘stunning axes’ (on Ta716), which have been unanimously interpreted as sacrificial weapons (Killen, 1998: 422; Palaima, 2004: 236; Stocker & Davis, 2004: 190).

Several weapons are attested that could potentially have been utilised in the slaughter of animals. These include a double axe discovered at the site of the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros, which was reportedly sturdy enough to have had a practical function (Hägg, 1998: 102; Nikoloudis, 2001: 21). The head from a hammer-axe and an ivory pommel belonging to a dagger or sword were found in Room 31 of the Cult Centre at Mycenae (Taylour, 1969: 96). Kilian-Dirlmeier (1990: 158) interprets both of these as the remains of sacrificial weapons, although she does not exclude the possibility that the latter was deposited as a votive, which may not necessarily rule out a ritual use. The fact that these items were discovered in cult contexts potentially reinforces the connection between the slaughter of animals and cult practices. On Crete, two stone hammers were discovered in the West Temple Repository of the palace at Knossos (Evans, 1921: 468-469, fig.336), which Gesell (1985: 65) and Marinatos (1986: 23) suggest could have been used to stun small herbivores before their slaughter. A clearer indication of the performance of the ritualised slaughter of animals in an early period on Crete is perhaps provided by a bronze blade probably belonging to a dagger, discovered at the MM II sanctuary at Anemospilia, which was incised with a frontal boar’s head (Y. & E. Sakellarakis, 1997: 295, 597-598). As pigs were certainly sacrificed in later periods it is reasonable to regard this as a sacrificial weapon, which is additionally suggested by the cult context.

6.2 Bulls and Pigs in Sacrificial Contexts in Glyptic

6.2.1 The Motif of Bulls or Pigs upon a Table: Outline

This sub-group consists of eight hard stone lentoids, two soft stone lentoids, and four sealings.³¹² Of the ten artefacts with a secure provenance, four are from different sites on the mainland and six are from Crete, including three sealings from Knossos. None of the scenes contain any iconographic information that points to a date of manufacture earlier than LM/LH II. This, combined with the contexts outlined in the table, establishes a date of LM/LH II-III A for the motif.

I first discuss the examples depicting bulls lying upon a table, starting with the most explicit scene of bull-sacrifice, which appears upon the back of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus. Bulls are depicted upon tables at least twelve times in glyptic. These artefacts are organised by the different poses of the bulls, only three of which occur. They are labelled as ‘Pose A’, ‘Pose B’, and ‘Pose C’ and are described below. The analysis of these scenes is followed by an overview of the additional iconographic evidence linking bulls with sacrifice. A pig is only once securely depicted lying upon a table; the creatures in the final instance of this motif are identifiable only as herbivores but they are considered together with the bulls and pigs.

The tables upon which the animals lie are of similar forms and are depicted with two to four legs, some of which are incurved whereas others are straight or tapered at the bottom. It is important to emphasise that these tables are very different to the classes of architecture discussed in Chapter 5. The identification of these structures as tables rather than altars or low platforms is justified, firstly, by the clear representation of legs and, secondly, by the fact that in several instances the edge of the structure can clearly

³¹² The fragmentary sealing II.8.540 from Knossos is excluded as only part of a table and the crossed legs of an animal beneath it remain. Pini (2002: 18) reasonably connects this sealing with the motif of bulls lying upon a table, but the species of the animal cannot be securely discerned.

be discerned.³¹³ This indicates that a table rather than a long groundline is depicted, which is perhaps the case on I.515/II.8.498 below. The identification is confirmed by the scene upon the back of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus, where a table is clearly shown (Long, 1974: pl.30, fig.86). None of the examples in this sub-group contain any clear indications of the landscape in which they were set, in contrast to the motifs discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.³¹⁴

6.2.2 Bulls Lying upon a Table

It is constructive to briefly describe the scene depicted upon the back of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus in order to establish the iconographic convention for depicting sacrificial animals. It dates to early LM IIIA2 (La Rosa, 2000: 996-997) and so is approximately contemporary with the glyptic motif of animals upon a table.³¹⁵ A bull is depicted lying on its front, with its legs tied together so that the forelegs and hind-legs cross under the table beneath it. I term this ‘Pose A’. The bull is being bled and a rhyton set into the ground is catching the blood (Long, 1974: 63; Burke, 2005: 413). There are no scenes of animals being bled in glyptic, although II.6.173 below may depict a conical rhyton. Below the table are two small goats that are probably also to be sacrificed (Long, 1974: 62). A procession of at least two women and a man files past the table towards horned architecture, which serves as a cult indicator (Long, 1974: 64). This demonstrates that processions were an appropriate accompaniment to sacrifice in LM IIIA and confirms that both rituals could be linked with cult.

³¹³ On II.3.338, XI.52, and VS.1A.59 the ends of the table are indicated by vertical dashes. Similarly, on XI.258, VS.1B.230, I.264 and perhaps VS.1B.3 there is a clear gap between the side of the tabletop and the edge of the field. A man stands next to the end of the table on II.6.173.

³¹⁴ The only possible exception is the pillar on I.515/II.8.498, which depicts a related motif. I follow Marinatos (1984: 115) in regarding the palm on that seal-type and on XI.52 as a glyptic symbol, rather than an indication of the environment in which the scene was set.

³¹⁵ The most recent discussion of the iconography of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus (and its wider context) is that undertaken by Burke (2005: 403-422).

Bulls in exactly the same pose appear in five scenes in glyptic, confirming the interpretation of these animals as victims. The seal-type II.6.173 (fig.19) appears upon a clay stopper from Mallia. It depicts a male figure holding out his arms in parallel towards a bull lying upon a table. His gesture is similar to that of the woman on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus, although his arms are raised over the bull (Long, 1974: 61). This scene may represent an earlier phase of the ritual; the man may be consecrating the animal and/or saying a prayer.

Above the bull are four floating symbols, that on the right being clearly recognisable as a pair of horns of consecration. The two triangles next to it are reasonably interpreted as conical rhyta by Long (1974: 63), which could imply that the bull's blood is to be collected like that on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus. Long (1974: 62) reads the long symbol on the left as the knife that was to be used to sacrifice the animal, which is supported by a comparison with XI.52 below, which clearly indicates that knives were sacrificial weapons. The inclusion of these symbols, especially the horns of consecration, confirms the association with cult.

The head of the horned bull on the unprovenanced jasper lentoid II.3.338 differs from most of the other scenes in this sub-group as it is rendered frontally rather than in profile. It therefore resembles a bucranium, as do the heads of the bulls on VS.1B.3 and I.515/II.8.498 below. The bucranium is identified as a symbol that denotes sacrificial victims by Marinatos (1986: 25) and Hiller (2001: 294) and, similarly, Morgan (1995: 139) regards frontally rendered heads as symbols of death. The suggestion that bucrania and frontal heads always refer to death and/or sacrifice was rejected in 3.4.2. On the other hand, in the context of a sacrificial animal lying upon a table, a connection between the bucranium and death is more reasonable (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 263). The

frontal rendering of the bull's head on II.3.338 and the examples below may have been utilised in order to allude to the animal's impending fate (Marinatos, 1986: 16-17).

Between the legs of the table on II.3.338 is a profile animal head, which is to some extent paralleled by I.515/II.8.498 below. It is likely that it alludes to a second, waiting sacrificial victim like the goats on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus, as Long (1974: 62) suggests. Above the back of the bull is an impaled triangle. Marinatos (1986: 22, 62-63) proposes that this symbol represents a knife, due to the similarity in appearance to a weapon and the fact that it appears in an analogous position to the knife on XI.52 below. This is rendered more probable in light of the analysis undertaken in **3.4.1**, in which I argued that the form of the impaled triangle was based upon a bladed weapon.

Above the bull on the lentoid I.203 from Nafplio are three evenly spaced, equally sized circles. They have no parallels in this sub-group but the ring I.18 from Mycenae depicts eleven small circles between two rows of animal heads. In **4.2.3** I rejected Gill's (1964: 8) interpretation of these heads as belonging to sacrificial animals, which means that these circles cannot be regarded as sacrificial symbols, *contra* Morgan (1995: 142). Moreover, the circles on I.18 are much smaller compared to those on I.203. A closer comparison can be found in scenes depicting peaceful bulls, such as I.67 from Mycenae and I.197 from Asine, on which the circles are of a similar size, and appear in an analogous position, to those on I.203. The circles' only certain association, therefore, is with animals, perhaps specifically bulls. They may simply have been filling motifs.

XI.258 is a rock crystal lentoid allegedly from Attica. The top of the seal has been chipped away and it is unclear whether the bull is horned; one, possibly two, curved lines emanate from the animal's head but there seems to be a vertical bar joining

them, precluding their identification as horns. Finally, the bull on the sealing II.8.481 from Knossos raises its head to look across its back, which clearly indicates that it is alive, in contrast to the bulls that have been described thus far.

The most explicit scene of animal sacrifice in glyptic appears upon the agate lentoid XI.52, reportedly from Mycenae (fig.20). It depicts a bull in what I term ‘Pose B’: lying on its front with its legs unbound and tucked underneath it. Crucially, a knife is protruding from the bull’s neck, unequivocally demonstrating the connection between this motif and the slaughter of animals. That the creature is dead is indicated by the fact that its tongue lolls from its mouth. This is the only depiction in glyptic iconography of a weapon in an unambiguously sacrificial context, that is, in direct juxtaposition with an animal.

A tree, reasonably identified as a palm by Marinatos (1984: 115), bends over the back of the bull on XI.52. It is not rendered as leaning over the animal to indicate that it had been deliberately pulled; it simply bends to fit the shape of the seal-face (Niemeier, 1989: 167; *contra* Morgan, 1995: 142-143). Palms in glyptic are not intrinsically linked with cult, as I demonstrated in 3.3.3. However, as additional evidence suggests a link between the motif of animals upon a table and cult, the palm on this seal can be regarded as a marker indicating the sacred nature of the space in which the sacrifice was offered (Marinatos, 1986: 61; 1989: 137-138).

Pose B appears five more times in glyptic. On II.8.482, a fragmentary sealing from Knossos, the animal’s head is lowered and its horns are short, suggesting that it is a calf. The tabletop is ornamented and the table-legs are very robust. In contrast, the bull on the worn carnelian lentoid VI.422, allegedly from Archanes, lies upon a simple table. Its tongue lolls lifelessly from its mouth, indicating that it is dead. Two projections rise

from the animal's head: that on the left is clearly an ear but it is unclear whether the projection to the right is a second ear or a horn.

VS.1B.3 from Kynos derives from a late context but the fact that it is made of a hard stone precludes a date of manufacture after LH IIIA. The bull's head is rendered frontally, like that on II.3.338 above, but it has been rotated ninety degrees to the right. The table-legs are embellished with grooves. Below the table is a dog in flying gallop. Its relation to the scene above is enigmatic; it is possible that it was included in order to allude to the method of the bull's capture, through a successful hunt involving the dog.

On the lentoid VS.1B.230 from Armeni the centre of the scene has worn away, hindering a clear identification of the animal. A thin, spiked object curves around its back in an identical manner to the palm on XI.52, which could suggest that it is a stylised tree or branch. Alternatively, it could be compared with the bristly back of a boar; the three boars on the unprovenanced lentoid IX.136 each have a dashed, curved line identical to that on VS.1B.230 marking their backs. The interpretation of the animal on VS.1B.230 as a bull, rather than a boar, is perhaps rendered more likely due to the presence of a projection rising from its head, which could be read as a horn.

The scene on II.8.480 from Knossos is incomplete as the top half of the sealing has broken away. Four human legs clad in garments decorated with horizontal bands can be seen between the two incurved struts of the table. The feet point in the direction of the bull's head and they probably belong to two figures. They are standing behind the table and so would be partially obscured by the bull's body. It is possible that they are taking part in a procession past the table, as is depicted upon the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus.

The bull on the lentoid I.264 from Tragana lies upon its back, which I label

‘Pose C’. However, there is a gap between its back and the table, with the result that it appears as if it is floating, with all four legs raised above its body. The connection with sacrifice is assured by the fact that the table has three incurving legs, a form that is closely paralleled by that on VS.1B.3 above. Moreover, there is a similar gap between the bull’s body and the tabletop on II.6.173 above.

6.2.3 Additional Instances of Bulls in Sacrificial Contexts

The seal-type I.515/II.8.498 from Knossos depicts two standing bulls, one craning its neck above the other.³¹⁶ They stand upon a horizontal line that separates the lower third of the scene from the space occupied by the bulls. Directly below the centre of this line is a pillar. The identification of this line as a tabletop is precluded by the fact that the tables depicted above always have multiple legs, none of which resemble pillars. However, a connection between this scene and sacrifice is suggested by the inclusion of a palm that reaches across the bulls’ backs, paralleling that on XI.52. Moreover, two ram heads are depicted below the dividing line, which could allude to additional sacrificial victims, like the head on II.3.338 above. Finally, II.8.481 above and VS.1A.59 below provide parallels for the depiction of live animals in sacrificial contexts.

The scene on I.515/II.8.498 appears to be more obviously symbolic compared to those discussed above. The pillar that appears beneath the bulls has two capitals separated by a small gap. In this it resembles that on VS.1B.73, discussed in 3.2.4, which is flanked by animals. In 3.2 I accepted the hypothesis that pillars could serve as metonyms for larger buildings, particularly the palace. It is possible that the pillar on

³¹⁶ Gill (2002: 101) notes that the two sealing fragments (I.515 in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens and II.8.498 in the Heraklion Museum) were impressed by the same seal.

I.515/II.8.498 alludes to the environment in which the sacrifice was to take place. The zooarchaeological remains from the palace at Pylos cited in **6.1.2** indicate that animal sacrifices were performed in palatial contexts. I.515/II.8.498, therefore, could be one of the few scenes of a sacrificial nature in glyptic that contains allusions to the environment in which it is set.

The gold ring V.198 was discovered on the mainland, perhaps at Thebes. It depicts a bull tied to a structure consisting of two uprights and a lintel, perhaps with a columnar object between the uprights, recalling the altar on I.86, discussed in **5.2.4**. This links the scene with cult and suggests that V.198 was likewise engraved in LH II-III A. Nilsson (1950: 229), Marinatos (1986: 16), and Furumark (1988: 74) interpret the bull on V.198 as a sacrificial victim awaiting its slaughter, much like the goats below the table on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus. A connection with sacrifice is strengthened by the fact that a tree leans over the bull's back, as on XI.52 and I.515/II.8.498 above. The fact that the scene was engraved upon a gold ring also highlights the connection between bulls and high status, which is explored in more detail below.

Several scenes depict men standing with or leading bovines, including VS.1A.173 from a MM III-LM I context at Khania, on which a man restrains a hornless bovine on a leash. Slightly later examples include two hard stone lentoids attributed to Crete. On VI.329 a man reaches out to touch three bulls whereas on VII.102 a man leads a bull by a leash tied to its horns. Krzyszkowska (2005: 205) suggests that these scenes could allude to sacrifice. The fact that the bovines on VS.1A.173 and VII.102 are clearly leashed corresponds with the depiction of the sacrificial bull on V.198 above. Moreover, Younger (1992: 262, 275) rightly draws attention to the jewellery of the man on VII.102 (armbands and neck-ware), which perhaps removes the scene from the

everyday.³¹⁷

That these scenes potentially possess cult significance is perhaps additionally suggested by the fact that the same actions are depicted being performed by daemons. On VI.304 and VI.305, both hard stone lentoids attributed to Crete, daemons guide bulls by their horns in an almost identical manner to the man on VII.102.³¹⁸ Daemons are also illustrated carrying bulls, as on IX.129 and XI.39, both unprovenanced hard stone lentoids. Gill (1964: 9), Weingarten (1991: 14), and Rehak (1995b: 216) argue that these scenes depict daemons carrying or leading bulls to sacrifice, through parallels with the motif of women carrying animals. However, the daemons that carry animals have also been interpreted as hunters with their prey, for example by Crowley (1989a: 61; 2013: 67). Standing men and daemons also appear with goats and rams, so further discussion of the connection between these scenes and sacrifice is postponed until 6.3.4.

A final potential example of a sacrificial bull in glyptic is provided by XI.330. This unprovenanced agate lentoid depicts a standing woman accompanied by a hornless bull, which floats in a rampant pose. The scene is further removed from reality by the fact that the woman is lion-headed. Between the woman and the bull are two figure-of-eight shields floating in mid-air. Morgan (1995: 148) argues that the animal is sacrificial and that the woman is either a goddess or a priestess wearing a mask. The woman's hands, however, resemble paws. This indicates that the scene does not depict a real ritual involving a costume; rather, the woman is a fantastic composite creature. Moreover, as I have repeatedly demonstrated, figure-of-eight shields are not exclusively sacrificial symbols, *contra* Marinatos (1986: 64). It is wise, therefore, to distance

³¹⁷ Men wearing jewellery in cult contexts appear on I.119 below and on the Master Impression from Khania.

³¹⁸ The leading of an animal to sacrifice also has precedent in the examples depicting women, as is demonstrated by XI.335 below.

XI.330 from the theme of sacrifice. It could be a unique fusion of the motifs of lions with their prey and that of composite creatures, both of which often occur with figure-of-eight shields.³¹⁹

Perhaps the only instance of a sacrificial bull in wall-painting derives from the northeast wall of Vestibule 5 in the palace at Pylos and dates to LH IIIB (McCallum, 1987: 78-87, pls.VIIIa-c).³²⁰ This wall-painting illustrates a procession of men wearing either kilts or robes and one woman in a flounced skirt, who accompany a bull that is twice their size (Lang, 1969: 192-193; McCallum, 1987: 78-87). Lang (1969: 38) notes that the men are carrying equipment that may have been used in a sacrifice, such as vessels and perhaps an offering table, although no sacrificial weapons are included. She reasonably theorises that the bull was to be sacrificed before providing the meat for a feast, which was perhaps alluded to in the Throne Room (Lang, 1969: 193; also McCallum, 1987: 96; Marinatos, 1988a: 15).

Cameron (1967: 338, 341-342, fig.12) proposes that the Chariot Fresco from the palace at Knossos, which probably dates to LM II/IIIA, depicts a sacrificial bull walking in procession behind a chariot. This theory is accepted by Marinatos (1986: 32), Immerwahr (1990: 94-95), and Davis (1995: 16), but its fragmentary nature precludes a firm interpretation. Moreover, whereas the above Pylos procession includes items that could refer to feasting and sacrifice, these are entirely lacking in the Chariot Fresco.

³¹⁹ Lions and prey with figure-of-eight shields appear upon the unprovenanced lentoids VI.377 and X.129. Half-human, half-animal creatures are illustrated with the shields on I.216 from Prosymna, VS.3.113 from Khania, and XII.238, which is unprovenanced.

³²⁰ McCallum (1987: 91-96, 132-133, pls.IX-X) reconstructs a second bull, only the shoulder of which remains (19 C 6), lying upon a sacrificial platform or altar to the right of the lyre player in the Throne Room. However, Stocker & Davis (2004: 190) refer to a re-examination of this fragment undertaken in 2002-2003 that indicates that this piece does not depict an animal.

6.2.4 A Pig Lying upon a Table

On I.80 from Mycenae the animal is identified by Boardman (1970: 105) as a deer, but the faint indications of a tusk indicate that it is a pig. It lies upon its back and a slim figure of uncertain gender leans over it. (S)he perhaps wears the long undecorated dress referred to in 2.3.3, 4.3.1, and 4.3.3 that is associated with figures of ambiguous gender. Alternatively, Crowley (2013: 174) classifies the garment on I.80 as a tunic, rather than a dress, and so identifies the figure as a man, following Boardman (1970: 105) and Marinatos (1986: 25). I accept this suggestion, albeit with some reservations.

Boardman (1970: 105) and Marinatos (1986: 25) argue that the figure on I.80 is dissecting or dismembering the pig. However, both the figure's hands are obscured by the animal's legs and I see no firm indication of a knife. It is likely that the figure on I.80 is binding the pig's legs together, in preparation for its sacrifice.

No other scenes in glyptic depict figures physically interacting with sacrificial animals, which precludes any firm conclusions regarding the gender or status of the individuals who performed the slaughter. Ventris & Chadwick (1973: 148) tentatively translate the word *i-je-ro-wo-ko* on the tablet Ep613 from Pylos as 'sacrificing priest'. As Lupack (2011: 208 n.8) notes, however, this does not necessarily indicate that this man carried out the sacrifice himself; he may have simply officiated over the ritual.

There are no other clear instances of pigs in sacrificial contexts in glyptic iconography; the possible reasons for this are outlined below.

6.2.5 Other Herbivores Depicted upon a Table

The last glyptic scene of animals upon a table appears upon the glass lentoid VS.1A.59 from Milatos on Crete. Three heads can be discerned but the animals can

only be identified as herbivores. Like the bulls on I.515/II.8.498 above they are standing, but the structure is clearly a table, indicated by the vertical dashes marking the edge of the tabletop. This suggests that the scene relates to sacrifice. Below the table are four circles; the two in the centre between the table-legs are joined so that they resemble a figure-of-eight shield. In my discussion of VS.3.308 in **3.2.5** I argued that circles were used as fillers and that these have sometimes been erroneously identified as figure-of-eight shields. The same interpretation applies to the shapes on VS.1A.59, which are simply fillers.

Crowley (2013: 23) observes that the evidence suggests that glass seals only started to be produced in LM/LH IIIA2. This is consistent with VS.1A.59's late context. It is likely, therefore, that it is the latest example of sacrificial animals upon a table in glyptic. It is also only the second seal in the sub-group made of a soft material; the first is VS.1B.230, which is also from a late context on Crete.

6.2.6 The Motif of Bulls or Pigs upon a Table: Origins

This motif is not attested in the Neopalatial Period, which leads Cameron (1975: 195-196) to suggest that it is Mycenaean.³²¹ However, from its apparent inception in LM/LH II, the motif seems to have been evenly distributed between sites on the mainland and Crete, making it difficult to ascertain its region of origin (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 205). The motif appears to have formed in the palatial centres of Knossos, Mycenae, and Pylos; it is only securely attested in more peripheral areas in LM/LH IIIA and later. This pattern of distribution is compared with that of the other motifs discussed in this thesis in the Conclusion.

³²¹ This is consistent with Burke's (2005: 416-419) reasonable interpretation of the iconography of the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus as a Mycenaean creation that employs Minoan symbolism.

6.2.7 The Motif of Bulls or Pigs upon a Table: Relationship with Reality

This motif is often assumed to depict reality. Nilsson (1950: 231) and Dietrich (1988: 38-39), for example, argue that the motif indicates that the bulls must have first been stunned in order to lay them upon the table. However, a fully-grown bull can weigh between 500 and 1000kg, which renders it unlikely that it would have been possible to lift such a creature onto a table, even if it was unconscious. Moreover, VS.1A.59 depicts live animals standing upon a table and the bull on II.8.481 is clearly conscious, which further removes the motif from reality, as does the appearance of the ‘floating’ bull on I.264. The inclusion of symbolic elements such as palms, disembodied animal heads, and floating symbols similarly emphasises the scenes’ lack of realism. One could suggest that some of the ‘tables’ are actually low platforms onto which a bull could have been walked before being stunned.³²² However, on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus and II.6.173 the structures are clearly depicted at waist-height.

It is likely, therefore, that the actual slaughter of the bull did not take place upon a table like those depicted. The bulls could have been slaughtered upon a low platform or in a special area, in some cases having first been rendered unconscious. Once the carcass had been butchered, the meat would have been placed upon an offering table. I suggest that this is the table that is represented in glyptic. In other words, the whole bull that is depicted upon the table unambiguously represents the offering that was being made, whereas in reality only portions of the meat would have been placed upon the

³²² Marinatos (1986: 12, 17) suggests that sacrificial platforms are depicted with a bull on the seal-type II.8.475 from Knossos and with pigs on the lentoids II.3.21 (also from Knossos) and IX.136, which is unprovenanced. On II.8.475 the ‘platform’ takes the form of a double dividing line above a spiral frieze, whereas on the latter two seals it consists of double or single dividing lines, which appear above diagonal banding on IX.136. Unlike the animals depicted upon tables, none of the animals on the ‘platforms’ have any indications of being prepared for sacrifice: they are not bound and all of them are still alive. It is likely, therefore, that the ‘platforms’ are simply decorative and embellished groundlines.

table.³²³ A table identical to that on I.264 is depicted upon V.608 from Naxos, described below, where it can be clearly identified as an offering table.

A similar divergence from reality can be detected in the proportions in which bulls and pigs appear in sacrificial contexts in glyptic. There is only one clear instance of a pig in a sacrificial context, whereas bulls are depicted numerous times lying upon a table, or potentially being led by a man or daemon. The epigraphic and archaeological evidence, however, suggests that pigs, as well as goats and sheep, were far more frequently offered for sacrifice than bovines.³²⁴ The rarity of pigs in sacrificial contexts in glyptic is surely related to the fact that they were considered less prestigious than cattle, as they produced many surplus young (Hamilakis & Konsolaki, 2004: 143). Similarly, goats and sheep, which were easily replaceable, in reality would have been sacrificed more frequently than bulls, as Hägg & Lindau (1984: 74) point out. Therefore, offerings of pigs, sheep, and goats, and so the depiction of these offerings, would not have been highly desirable or prestigious.

In contrast, the prestigious nature of the offering of bulls is confirmed by tablet Un718 from Pylos, which records that the *wanax* was the only individual who donated a bull to a feast (Palaima, 1995: 132). This also demonstrates that the sacrifice of bulls was reserved for special occasions. The prominence of the *wanax*, and his association with the bull, is paralleled on the wall-painting from Pylos described above. Kilian (1988: 300 n.1) and Palaima (1995: 132-133) note that the male individual walking before the bull is a third larger than the other figures; they reasonably suggest that both his size and position may be sufficient to identify him as the *wanax*.

³²³ Bendall (2008: 80-86) estimates how much meat would have been yielded by the different species of sacrificial animals.

³²⁴ This is most clearly illustrated by the proportions of species recorded as offered for sacrifice on the Wu series of nodules from Thebes, referred to in 6.1.2.

The connection with high status is emphasised by the fact that the depiction of sacrificial bulls is associated with high status media, principally hard stones and gold rings, with the former being favoured. In contrast, the only two attestations of the motif of an animal upon a table that occur upon soft materials are those that depict animals that may not be bulls (VS.1B.230 and VS.1A.59). Moreover, the representations of bulls upon a table are associated with the palatial centres of Mycenae, Pylos, and Knossos. It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the representation of a bull lying upon an offering table was chosen by the seal owner, who was probably a member of the elite, in order to imply to others that they had sufficient wealth and status to enable them to contribute such an animal. The numerous sealings from Knossos that bear this motif demonstrate the means by which these representations were displayed to others.

The connection between high status and sacrifice is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the agate cushion V.608 from Naxos. A standing man holds a spear, which he raises in a commanding gesture towards a palm. Between the palm and the man is a low offering table upon which are arranged a knife, conical rhyton, ewer, and a krater, all of which can be linked to scenes depicting the sacrificial ritual, as Long (1974: 62) and Marinatos (1984: 117-118) note.³²⁵

On the basis of his commanding gesture, Marinatos (1984: 117-118, 122) and Niemeier (1989: 183-184) interpret the man as a deity, the palm serving as a marker of his epiphany. In 4.2.1, however, I followed Palaima (1995: 136) in arguing that the commanding gesture was connected with authority and not specifically with divinity. Moreover, the palm is never clearly associated with epiphanies, as I demonstrated in 3.3.3. Rehak (1995a: 112) identifies the figure on V.608 as a cult official or votary. I,

³²⁵ The dagger appears in the neck of the bull on XI.52, at least one conical rhyton is depicted above the bull on II.6.173, and the other vessels are illustrated upon the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus. The palm accompanies sacrificial bulls on XI.52 and I.515/II.8.498.

however, tentatively suggest that he is a powerful individual who is demonstrating his control over cult practices by standing with his commanding gesture directly over the implements of sacrifice. He could perhaps be a ruler; as Wright (1995: 65-68) points out, powerful individuals would utilise control over religious rituals as a means of displaying their close relationship with the divine, and thereby their power. The figure on II.6.173 and the '*wanax*' in the Pylos wall-painting could be viewed in the same manner: not only do they contribute to the sacrifice, they also have an influential role in the ritual.

The connection between certain motifs related to sacrifice and high status finds further confirmation in the analysis of find contexts undertaken in **6.5**.

Table 10: Provenanced Examples of Bulls or Pigs Lying upon a Table

No.	II.6.173	I.203	II.8.481	II.8.482	VS.1B.3
Date (Context)	LM IIIB	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	LH IIIB-C
Date (Stylistic)	LM II-III A	LH/LH II-III A	LM II-III A	LM II-III A	LM/LH II-III A
Find Place	Mallia	Nafplio	Knossos	Knossos	Kynos
Exact Find-Spot	Quartier Epsilon, Room IV 2, Level IV	Chamber Tomb 2	Palace, Room of the Chariot Tablets	Unknown	Rubbish dump
Shape	Stopper (1, L)	L	Sealing fragment (1, L)	Sealing (1, L)	L
Material	(HS)	Agate	(HS)	(HS?)	Rose quartz
Species of Animal	Bull	Bull	Bull	Calf?	Bull
Pose of Animal	A	A	A	B	B
Additional Elements	Standing figure, two conical rhyta, HoC & knife above	Three small circles above bull's back	None	None	Dog below table, bull's head resembles bucranium

Table 10 Cont.

No.	VS.1B.230	II.8.480	I.264	I.80	VS.1A.59
Date (Context)	LM III	Unknown	LH IIIA	LH II-III	LM IIIA-B
Date (Stylistic)	LM IIIA-B	LM II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH II-III A	LM IIIA2-B
Find Place	Armeni	Knossos	Tragana	Mycenae	Milatos
Exact Find-Spot	Tomb 104	Palace, Landing on the Grand Staircase	Tholos 2, pit 3	Panagia Hill cemetery, Tomb 47	Vorino plot, larnax 2
Shape	L	Nodule (1, R)	L	L	L
Material	Slate	(M?)	Rock crystal	Agate	Glass
Species of Animal	Bull/boar?	Bull	Bull	Pig	Herbivores (three)
Pose of Animal	B	B	C	C	Standing on table
Additional Elements	Tree/branch leaning over animal's back?	Four human legs behind table	None	Male(?) figure leaning over pig	Circles below

6.3 Goats and Rams in Sacrificial Contexts in Glyptic

6.3.1 The Motif of Women Carrying Goats or Rams: Outline

There are nineteen examples of the motif of women carrying goats or rams, which occur on thirteen soft stone lentoids, five hard stone lentoids, and one sealing.³²⁶ Of the examples with known provenances, six are from the mainland and six are from Crete, although only two of the latter can be associated with a specific site. To avoid repetition, unless otherwise stated the seals described below are soft stone lentoids attributed to Crete. This motif has only five secure Minoan precursors; however, it is likely that several artefacts in the main sub-group were manufactured in the Neopalatial Period. They are separated from the precursors as they are either unprovenanced or derive from later contexts.

A connection between this motif and animal sacrifice was first suggested by Sakellarakis (1972: 245-258), who proposed that the women are priestesses and the animals sacrificial victims. This has received wide acceptance, being followed by Marinatos (1986: 12), Tamvaki (1989: 266), and Pini (2010: 335), among others. However, some scholars, such as Kenna (1972: 334, 364), Crowley (1989a: 36) and Bloedow (2001: 5), regard the women carrying goats or rams as goddesses, connecting this motif with that of the female figures flanked by animals, discussed in Chapter 2.

The many differences between the motifs of female figures flanked by animals and that showing women carrying goats or rams indicate that they are not related. Firstly, although the women flanked by animals in three instances grasp the animals, in

³²⁶ The unprovenanced lentoid XIII.135 is excluded, as Pini (1992a: 13) has demonstrated that the animal is seated, rather than being carried by the woman standing next to it. I also exclude a cylinder that depicts two women and two animals (III.551), which is connected with this motif by Pini (2010: 334-335), as the scene is too abraded to be certain of the relationship between the women and animals.

glyptic this only occurs with birds or dolphins.³²⁷ Secondly, in the antithetic motif the women are always flanked by live animals, whereas the majority of the quadrupeds that are carried by women appear to hang down lifelessly (Tamvaki, 1985: 274). Finally, the women carrying animals are always depicted in profile (with the exception of those on IS.180 and XI.27), whereas the women flanked by animals are usually rendered frontally and are clearly stationary. There is no clear reason, therefore, to regard the women carrying goats or rams as deities; I follow Sakellarakis (1972: 245-258) in interpreting them as priestesses.

I organise the artefacts by the pose of the women, which are divided into ‘Pose A’, of which there are eleven examples, and ‘Pose B’. I then discuss the one example depicting more than one woman, which is followed by the five seals that bear unclear arrangements of the motif. After discussing the Minoan precursors, I briefly outline the additional instances of goats and rams in potentially sacrificial contexts.

6.3.2 Women Carrying Goats or Rams

The first eleven lentoids show the women in ‘Pose A’, the clearest example of which is provided by the carnelian lentoid I.221 from Vapheio (fig.21). The woman carries a ram with its head stretched over her shoulder and its body hanging down in front of her. She raises one hand to support the animal and places her other hand on her hip. This pose creates an impression of effortlessness and is the one most frequently employed in the sub-group. A long, slender object hangs down the woman’s back, terminating at the bottom in two parallel horizontal lines. A simpler linear form appears behind the woman’s back on VS.1A.369 below. Those on I.221 probably originate at

³²⁷ On I.223b, VII.134, and IX.154, discussed in 2.3.3. The only example in iconography of a woman grasping quadrupeds is on the Zakros Diadem, where she holds two goats.

the woman's head (her right shoulder and the animal's head obscure their descent); they could be tassels from a headdress.

II.3.86 and VI.322 depict women in the same pose. On the latter, the goat's horns are evident. The woman's pose is again clear on XII.276a, but the animal's body has almost completely disappeared, being obliterated where the seal has chipped at the string-hole. On XII.239 the engraver has provided the woman with a detailed flounced skirt but the rest of the scene is heavily stylised. The woman's pose is subtly different as her right arm is straight rather than bent to her hip. Three almost parallel lines protrude from behind her skirt, perhaps tassels from a headdress.

The previous five examples show the women and animals proceeding to the right, but the same pose is utilised by an almost equal number of women facing to the left. This suggests that neither direction possessed great symbolic significance, which is consistent with the statement made in **4.1.1**. VS.1A.369, a haematite lentoid from Epidaurus, is almost a mirror image of the scene on I.221, down to the horizontal bands on the woman's skirt and the long object hanging down behind her back.

I.222 is a lentoid from Vapheio and it carries a heavily stylised design.³²⁸ The woman's skirt is carefully incised but the engraver did not leave sufficient room for her head. Her free arm is very bloated and she has long, spindly fingers, paralleling those of the women on I.86 from Mycenae, discussed in **5.2.4**. Casting aside the unclear rendering, at its core I.222 is a mirror image of I.221 in terms of the pose of the woman and the animal.

The next four examples are abraded but enough remains of the scenes to indicate that the women employ Pose A, or a close variation, and are proceeding to the left. On

³²⁸ Morgan (1989: 146-147) has shown that the object to the woman's right on I.222 is the sleeve of her bodice rather than a second animal.

II.3.287 and VIII.144 the skirt of the women is the most evident feature, with only faint traces of the animals and the women's upper body remaining. The rendering of the scene on VI.323 is disproportionate: the animal's neck is elongated so as to stretch across the woman's shoulders and its head has almost entirely worn away. On XIII.D5 the woman's head is misshapen, as is that of the animal she carries.

The woman on the sealing IS.180 from Pylos holds a goat by its horns, rather than carrying it over her shoulder, which I label 'Pose B'. An almost identical scene appears upon the carnelian lentoid XI.27 from an unspecified site in Elis (fig.22). However, there are subtle differences between the seal and sealing, which suggest that IS.180 was impressed by a hard stone seal very similar, but not identical, to XI.27 (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 295). Their find-spots make it reasonable to suggest that they were manufactured on the mainland. IS.180 and XI.27 therefore contradict Marinatos' (1986: 55) theory that the Mycenaeans misunderstood the nature of the animal carried by the women and so left the species vague.

The fact that the torsos of the women on IS.180 and XI.27 are depicted frontally, rather than in profile as on the rest of the examples, suggests that they are stationary and so not transporting the animal. Indeed, Sakellarakis (1972: 246-247) argues that these artefacts are not connected with sacrifice, but does not provide any clear reason for this. Despite this, and the fact that the animal is held differently, it is likely that IS.180 and XI.27 relate to the carrying of a sacrificial animal (Tamvaki, 1985: 274). Crucially, the goat is frequently attested in this sub-group and the method of carrying it (by the horns) could be viewed as being more realistic. It is likely that these two examples testify to a variant of the motif that developed on the mainland (Tamvaki, 1985: 274).

The next artefact to be discussed, the chalcedony lentoid I.220 from Vapheio,

augments the scene with a second woman. She stands behind the woman carrying the animal, who employs Pose A, although her free hand is lowered rather than placed on her hip. This second woman raises her hand to her face in a gesture that is consistent with ritual processions: it is used by the central woman on I.108, discussed in **5.2.1** (Niemeier, 1989: 169). Bloedow (2001: 3) notes that the woman carrying the animal on I.220 is possibly wearing a diadem or tiara; the hairstyle of her companion is less clear. This perhaps makes it more likely that the elements protruding from the women's skirt on I.221, XII.239, and VS.1A.369 are tassels flowing from headgear.

It is likely that the inclusion of the second figure on I.220 represents a mainland fusion of the motif of women carrying goats or rams with that of the procession, which was very popular in LM/LH II-III A. That I.220 was engraved on the mainland is suggested by the stylisation of the women's bodies. Like the woman on I.222, in place of hands they have two or three long, willowy fingers, just like the women on I.86 from Mycenae, discussed in **5.2.4**, which dates to LH II-III A.

The remaining examples are either severely abraded or arrange the scene in a slightly different manner. On II.4.35 the woman's triangular skirt is heavily incised and so can be clearly discerned, but only the forelegs of the animal remain. From its position relative to the woman it is likely that the animal was being carried to the right. On the serpentine lentoid II.4.204 from Gournia the woman clearly uses one hand to lift the animal over her shoulder.

The woman on II.3.213 has a pose resembling Pose A but it is clear that the animal's head has not been placed over the woman's shoulder. It appears to hang from the woman's left hand; Platon & Pini (1984: 248) state that in her right hand she is holding a knife. However, it appears more likely that the 'knife' is actually part of the

woman's arm, which is consistent with Marinatos' (1988a: 13) statement that women are never depicted in glyptic holding sacrificial weapons.³²⁹

III.359 depicts a woman facing left with one arm stretching out behind her. On the left is an animal that appears to hang in mid-air. The lentoid is damaged in the centre of the field, however, so it is likely that the woman's other arm was originally wrapped around the animal's body. Sakellarakis (1972: 246) and Pini (2010: 334) are thus right to link III.359 with this motif.

On XI.119 the woman stands holding out both her arms symmetrically at a forty-five degree angle from her sides. One hand touches the back of a goat, which has exactly the same pose as that on II.3.287 above, with both hind-legs off the floor as if being carried. However, despite the fact that its neck is craning backwards, as expected, its head does not reach behind the woman's shoulder and she does not attempt to lift it. Nonetheless, the animal's pose and species, in addition to the style and soft material of the seal, links XI.119 with this motif.

6.3.3 The Motif of Women Carrying Goats or Rams: Minoan Precursors

This motif has five secure Minoan precursors consisting of three soft stone lentoids and two seal-types. The first is the seal-type II.7.23 from the Zakros deposit. The woman carries a hornless quadruped with its head over her shoulder, as in Pose A, but she uses both arms to lift it, which makes the scene appear more realistic. The woman is facing or walking towards a pile of rocks, which Sakellarakis (1972: 255-257) argues is an altar. This theory was based upon an inaccurate drawing of the seal-type, however. Pini (1992a: 17) observes that the rocks are almost the height of the field and

³²⁹ See 6.2.4 for a refutation of the suggestion that the figure on I.80 is a woman slaughtering a pig.

do not have a flat top upon which the animal could have been deposited. It is possible that they allude to a rocky landscape.³³⁰

The women on the next three Minoan precursors all employ Pose A. The serpentine lentoid II.4.111 was discovered in a LM I context in the House of the Frescoes at Knossos and is finely engraved. The engraving on II.3.117, a steatite lentoid that was excavated in a LM IB context in the villa at Ayia Triadha, is, in contrast, very crude. On the serpentine lentoid VS.3.38, which was discovered in a LM I context in a Neopalatial building at Mallia, the woman's skirt is intricately decorated but her head is crudely rendered. She leans forward, possibly alluding to the effort needed to carry the ram, which, unusually, has a frontally rendered head.

The final secure Minoan precursor is the seal-type VS.1A.130 from Khania, which was impressed by a cylinder or an amygdaloid, making it the only instance of the motif that was not engraved upon a lentoid. Its difference is emphasised by the fact that the woman wears a long dress instead of the flounced skirt worn by all the other women depicted carrying goats or rams. She holds both hands to the animal, which is a hornless goat.

These are the only five examples of the motif of women carrying goats or rams from secure Neopalatial contexts. However, it is generally regarded as a motif primarily associated with LM I or LM I-II soft stone lentoids (Pini, 2010: 334-336). At least nine additional soft stone lentoids should be dated to LM I on the basis that the women employ Pose A,³³¹ like all but two of the secure precursors. These seals have been discussed separately from the secure LM I artefacts in order to emphasise that this cannot be confirmed beyond doubt.

³³⁰ A similar interpretation can be applied to the rocks on II.7.31 below.

³³¹ II.3.86, VI.322, XII.239 (dated to LM I by Younger, 1983: 123), II.3.287, VIII.144, VI.323, II.4.204, II.3.213, and III.359.

Pini (2010: 338) suggests that these soft stone seals could have been produced for the general populace. However, he also points out that the fact that soft stone seals are known to have impressed sealings in the palaces warns against exclusively linking soft stones with the poor (Pini, 2010: 338). The reality appears to have been far more complex.

The motif's earliest secure appearance on the mainland is in LH IIA in the Vapheio tholos (I.220, I.221, and I.222). I.221, as well as VS.1A.369 from the sanctuary at Epidauros, may be Minoan imports; at the very least they are heavily influenced by Minoan glyptic as they arrange the scene in exactly the same way as the Neopalatial precursors (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 253).³³² On the other hand, I.220 and I.222 show some clear mainland characteristics, particularly in the rendering of the women's hands, but their find context indicates that they are nearly contemporary with the Minoan examples.

6.3.4 Additional Instances of Goats and Rams in Sacrificial Contexts in Glyptic

The unprovenanced hard stone lentoid XI.335 depicts a standing woman reaching out with her right arm to a goat that is rearing up on its hind-legs. Sprays of vegetation appear in the field and on the left is a pair of horns of consecration, suggesting that the scene is connected with cult. Moreover, despite not being carried, the goat has almost exactly the same pose as the ram on I.221, which has been rotated forward by a few degrees.

The difference in the arrangement of the scene is emphasised by the fact that XI.335 was engraved upon a hard stone. Only six examples depicting women carrying

³³² Krzyszkowska (2005: 253) observes that VS.1A.369 was discovered with offerings that could potentially be Minoan imports.

goats or rams were engraved upon hard stones and all of them were discovered on the mainland, as Pini (2010: 335) observes. Moreover, it is notable that three of those scenes represent different variations of the motif, for example combining it with the procession (I.220), or representing the women holding the goats in a different manner (IS.180 and XI.27). This suggests that the people of the mainland were aware of the iconography of the motif but that they preferred to alter it rather than copy it. I would tentatively suggest that XI.335 relates to the sacrificial ritual, or that, at the very least, it was inspired by its iconography, and that it is a further example of a mainland variation of the motif.

There are no comparable scenes depicting men carrying goats or rams, or any other herbivores. Men are far more frequently shown with live herbivores, as I noted above, which include goats and rams. On the unprovenanced agate lentoid VI.330 a man is accompanied by two rams; he places a hand upon the horns of that nearest to him. Similarly, the man on the haematite lentoid VS.1B.88 from Tiryns reaches to the horns of a single ram. The link with cult is most evident on the gold ring I.119 from Mycenae, which was discussed in 5.3.4. Burkert (1985: 136-138) and Marinatos (1986: 12) reasonably propose that the goat that accompanies the standing man is a sacrificial victim. The goat is not to be sacrificed upon the architecture, which is a mainland variation of a tree-shrine. Rather, the architecture perhaps marks the point at which the goat becomes the property of the deity (Marinatos, 1986: 12).

It is possible that some of the other scenes of standing men with bulls, rams, or goats allude to sacrifice. Some of the men could perhaps be the owners of the animals who were offering them for sacrifice (Younger, 1992: 262, 275), or the shepherds who tended to the animals before they were ritually slaughtered. The possibility that only

I.119 depicts a sacrificial animal cannot be excluded, however, as Tamvaki (1989: 271) emphasises.

There are no instances of daemons leading goats or rams, but the creature carried by the daemon on the unprovenanced agate lentoid V.209 is reasonably identified by Younger (1986: 135) as a kid. The animal held in the paws of the daemon on the carnelian cushion II.3.105a from Kalyvia can be identified likewise. Moreover, a glass lentoid depicting a daemon carrying a quadruped, perhaps a goat or sheep, was recently discovered at Kalapodi in Central Greece, in the ruins of a temple that was destroyed during LH IIIA2 (Archibald, 2013: 20-21, fig.25). This provides another example, in addition to VS.1A.59 above, of the use of glass in LM/LH IIIA2 to render a motif that had previously been almost entirely restricted to hard stones, here that of daemons carrying an animal.

The theory that the animals carried by the daemons are sacrificial is perhaps supported by the scene that appears upon an ivory plaque from Thebes (Daux, 1968: 858, fig.1). A daemon is depicted carrying a hornless caprid over its shoulder. It is walking in a procession that was probably originally punctuated with palms, although only one remains (Gill, 1964: 21). The inclusion of the palm, in association with the carrying of an animal, suggests that this scene relates to sacrifice, as palms occur twice with sacrificial bulls. This suggests that, in this instance at least, the daemon is taking the place of the women in carrying a sacrificial animal (Marinatos, 1984: 120).

6.3.5 The Motif of Women Carrying Goats or Rams: Relationship with Reality

That this motif is potentially based upon reality is perhaps suggested by the fact that the women do not carry large animals such as bulls, which would have been

impossible for them to lift. Moreover, the size of the goats and rams is realistic relative to the women. Most scholars argue that the animals are to be understood as dead, as almost all of them hang limply from the shoulders of the women (Sakellarakis, 1972: 245-258; Burkert, 1985: 27; Marinatos, 1986: 34-35). The motif could refer to a post-kill phase of the sacrificial ritual, in which the carcasses were carried to a place where they were consecrated to a deity (Marinatos, 1986: 34-35). Alternatively, the animals could have been stunned and so are being taken to the place at which they will be slaughtered.

In attempting to utilise this motif in a reconstruction of the narrative of the sacrificial ritual, however, it is important to be aware that it represents an idealised version of reality. This is exemplified by the fact that the method most commonly employed to carry the animals would be impossible to recreate in reality. Moreover, the goat on I.220 has its eyes open, indicating that it is conscious. It is unthinkable that a woman would have been able to carry a conscious goat, especially over her shoulder. Additionally, many of the animals are not clearly carried by the women at all, such as that on XI.119. This warns against interpreting these scenes too literally; they may have a basis in reality but the engravers clearly made use of artistic license. It is possible that the main message the motif was intended to convey was that the animals were now the property of the deity, with the priestesses serving as its representatives.

Table 11: Provenanced Examples of Women Carrying Goats or Rams

No.	I.221	IL.3.86	VS.1A.369	I.222	IS.180	I.220	IL.4.204
Date (Context)	LH IIA	Unknown	None	LH IIA	LH IIIB2	LH IIA	Unknown
Date (Stylistic)	LM/LH I-II	LMI	LMI	LH I-II	LM/LH II-III A	LM/LH I-II	LMI
Find Place	Vapheio	Knossos	Epidauros	Vapheio	Pylos	Vapheio	Gournia
Exact Find-Spot	Tholos, cist	Unknown	Sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas, ash on altar	Tholos, cist	Palace, wall of South-western Building	Tholos, cist	House?
Shape	L	L	L	L	Nodule (1, L)	L	L
Material	Carnelian	Serpentine	Haematite	Agate	(HS)	Chalcedony	Serpentine
Species of Animal	Ram	Goat/ram	Ram	Goat	Goat	Goat	Ram/goat
Method Used to Carry Animal	Pose A, facing right	Pose A, facing right	Pose A, facing left	Pose A, facing left	Pose B	Pose A, facing left	Pose A(?), facing left
Additional Elements	Tassels hanging down woman's back	None	Tassels hanging down woman's back	None	None	Second woman behind first	None

6.4 Iconographic Evidence for the Sacrifice of Deer and Lions

The glyptic, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates that bulls, pigs, goats, and sheep were sacrificed in the LBA Aegean. To this list of sacrificial animals some scholars propose to add deer and lions, on the basis of glyptic iconography. However, an overview of the glyptic evidence indicates that deer and lions were considered as victims of the hunt only; there is no clear evidence that they were ritually slaughtered.

Before turning to the glyptic evidence concerning deer and lions, I must address the contention of Marinatos (1986: 13, 42) and Rehak (1995b: 221) that hunting and animal sacrifice were regarded as equivalent in the LBA Aegean. Marinatos' (1986: 42-45) main evidence for this derives from a series of seals depicting the heads of bearded men, whom she regards as 'priests', juxtaposed with animals; she somewhat implausibly argues that this demonstrates that priests were hunters. There is in fact no reason to suppose that the hunt was not primarily a secular activity, as argued by Bloedow (1992: 302; 1999: 61). The key function of the scenes of men hunting was probably to emphasise their power and masculinity, a theory later accepted by Marinatos (1990: 143). Moreover, none of the scenes discussed below, which I argue relate to hunting, contain any indications of possessing cult significance.

This is not to deny that hunting was indirectly connected with sacrifice; it would have been necessary to hunt and capture wild animals such as *agrimia* before they could be sacrificed. However, while the hunt, on a practical level, may sometimes have provided the animals to be sacrificed, the hunt was not religious or sacrificial in itself. The killing of an animal such as a lion in the hunt was not akin to or to be equated with sacrifice.

6.4.1 Deer

The iconographic evidence clearly indicates that deer were hunted in the LBA Aegean. Such a hunt is depicted on the gold ring I.15 from Mycenae, which shows a deer in full flight, pursued by hunters in a chariot. Similarly, a wall-painting from the palace at Pylos depicts a male hunter preparing to throw a spear at a stag (Lang, 1969: 68). Finally, a fragmentary wall-painting from Ayia Irini on Keos depicts hunters stalking deer, the meat of which is perhaps being prepared for a meal in a related scene (Abramovitz, 1980: 61-62, 68). Abramovitz (1980: 61-62, 68) does not connect this scene with animal sacrifice, in contrast to Marinatos (1988a: 15).

The main evidence presented in favour of the sacrificial nature of deer relates to the motif of daemons carrying animals, which was referred to above. Two hard stone lentoids attributed to Crete (VI.307 and XI.38) depict daemons carrying deer over their shoulders, which Weingarten (1991: 14) suggests are sacrificial.³³³ Moreover, Marinatos (1986: 47-48) suggests that the daemon on III.369, a rock crystal lentoid attributed to Knossos, is holding a knife in its paw, with which it will sacrifice the deer that hangs upside-down next to it.³³⁴ Gill (1964: 10), however, had already demonstrated that this daemon does not hold a knife or any other object. Moreover, the deer's contorted pose is reminiscent of creatures being carried. III.369 should be compared with II.4.204, III.359, and XI.119 above, which do not clearly represent the women as carrying the animals, even though that is how they are to be understood.

The similarities between the motifs of daemons carrying deer and women

³³³ The two stars that flank the daemon's lower body on XI.38 are similar to those that appear on several unprovenanced hard stone lentoids dating to LM II-III A that depict bull-men or other hybrids, such as III.363, VI.299, IX.128, and XI.336. These cannot reasonably be connected with cult, so I regard the stars on XI.38 as fillers.

³³⁴ Marinatos (1986: 12) additionally argues that deer were considered sacrificial due to the fact that the seal I.491 depicts a deer juxtaposed with a bucranium, which she interprets as a sacrificial symbol. The bucranium, however, is not exclusively sacrificial, as was demonstrated in 3.4.2.

carrying goats or rams are undeniably clear. However, deer are never depicted being carried by women or lying upon a table. The scenes of daemons carrying deer, and perhaps also bulls, more probably represent the daemon with its prey, which it has killed on the hunt (Crowley, 2013: 67). All the animals carried by the daemon appear to be dead; the bull on IX.129 is shown with its tongue lolling lifelessly from its mouth, as Crowley (1989a: 59) observes.

The iconographic evidence demonstrates that daemons were regarded as hunters from at least the Neopalatial Period. The seal-type II.7.31 from the LM IB deposit at Zakros depicts a daemon spearing a bull over a pile of rocks. Gill (1964: 10) interprets this as a rustic altar, which is unfounded as, like II.7.23 discussed above, the rocks do not exhibit the usual shape of an altar; they more probably serve to indicate a rocky terrain. This scene actually depicts the daemon as a hunter, as Rehak (1995b: 221) and Krzyszkowska (2005: 149) argue. This theory is supported by the fact that the spear is a weapon used by human hunters, such as those depicted on the wall-painting from Pylos referred to above. An additional example of daemons as hunters perhaps appears on a fresco fragment from the Cult Centre at Mycenae (NM 2665), which shows three daemons carrying a pole that Crowley (1989a: 61) reasonably proposes was used for transporting victims of the hunt.³³⁵ The two scenes of daemons carrying deer, therefore, can be connected with the hunt. The examples depicting the daemon carrying bulls could likewise refer to the hunt and not to sacrifice, as Nilsson (1950: 382) and Crowley (1989a: 61) argue.

In an attempt to support the argument that deer were sacrificed in the LBA, Marinatos (1986: 12) cites a fresco from a deposit at Ayia Triadha that depicts, from

³³⁵ The man on the seal-type II.8.238 from Knossos, who is surely a huntsman, carries a dead boar and kid on a pole.

right to left, two deer, a figure in a long dress, and the remains of a building (Militello, 2006: fig.7). Marinatos (1986: 12) argues that it depicts a woman leading the deer to an altar or shrine, where they are to be sacrificed. However, Cameron (1975: 186) rightly states that one should not assume that this scene alludes to sacrifice; the architecture may simply represent the place at which the animals are being presented. There are many examples of goats that appear near cult architecture without any sacrificial overtones being present. These include the goat on the Pylos ring depicting an epiphany (I.292, described in 5.2.2) and those on the wall-painting from Room 14 of the villa at Ayia Triadha, discussed in 4.3.4.

The epigraphic and archaeological sources do not provide any clear evidence for the sacrifice of deer. Deer are attested only three times in the Linear B archives analysed by Ventris & Chadwick (1973: 132).³³⁶ The lack of records is perhaps to be expected as deer were wild and so were not monitored in the same way as domestic flocks. Ventris & Chadwick (1973: 132) reasonably interpret the deer on these tablets as carcasses, possibly the quarry of *kunāgetai* (huntsmen). Finally, the archaeological evidence is likewise silent regarding the sacrifice of deer. In Archives Room 7 of the palace at Pylos, the remains of a single wild deer were found near those of the sacrificial bovines; Stocker & Davis (2004: 190) reasonably regard this animal as a hunting victim that was consequently consumed.

To conclude, the possibility that deer were sacrificed cannot be entirely excluded. The evidence suggests, however, that they were primarily regarded as the quarry of the hunt.

³³⁶ Deer are referred to on PY Cr868 + 875 (Ci) and PY Cr591 + fr. (Cii). There are also mentions of deer skin (*e-ra-pe-ja*) in PY Ub1316-1318. The references to deer in the Pylos tablets, as well as in the iconographic and archaeological records, have recently been analysed by R. Palmer (2012: 357-382).

6.4.2 Lions

Iconographic sources indicate that, like the deer, the lion was a popular quarry of the hunt in the LBA Aegean, at least on the mainland (Bloedow, 1992: 301-303; Shapland, 2010a: 117-120, 123; 2010b: 274-285). Numerous artefacts depict men engaged in battle with lions, such as the gold cushion from Grave Circle A at Mycenae (I.9). Others show men preparing lions for transport once their capture was complete, as on the seal-type II.7.33 from the LM IB Zakros deposit.³³⁷ To this hunting cycle can be added the unprovenanced lentoid XI.301, which depicts a man carrying a dead lion in each arm.³³⁸

A daemon is once depicted carrying lions, on XI.37, a lentoid from Crete. The bodies of two lions hang from a pole being carried by the daemon, which suggests that they are dead. Marinatos (1986: 13) argues that this seal demonstrates that lions were sacrificed. However, the lions hang down lifelessly in exactly the same manner as those on XI.301 above. This, combined with the fact that daemons were regarded as hunters, suggests that the daemon on XI.37 is carrying its prey.

A different interpretation is required for the unprovenanced lentoid VI.306, which depicts a daemon leading a live lion, with a figure-of-eight shield floating above its rump, which is doubtless a filler. This scene parallels VI.304 and VI.305 above, which probably illustrate daemons leading sacrificial bulls. However, I argue that VI.306 should in fact be compared with the scenes depicting live, peaceful lions accompanied by male figures. This motif is attested in the LM IB sealing deposits as

³³⁷ An additional instance of men fighting lions is provided by the seal-type I.307 from Pylos, whereas the lentoid I.224 from the Vapheio tholos depicts two men binding the legs of a lion.

³³⁸ This lentoid was briefly described in 2.2. It is possible that, rather than depicting whole lion carcasses, XI.301 actually represents a man carrying two lion *pelts*; Shapland (2010a: 123; 2010b: 277-285) reasonably argues that pelts were kept as hunting trophies, some of which were taken from the mainland to Crete. He suggests that these, rather than live lions, formed the basis for glyptic depictions of lions, especially on Crete, where no live lions were present, which explains some of the anatomical inaccuracies in the representations (Shapland, 2010a: 123; 2010b: 277-285).

well as in later mainland contexts and represents divine or mortal control over the animal world (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 139).³³⁹ The closest parallel to VI.306 probably appears upon II.3.24 from Knossos: the man and lion have almost identical poses to the daemon and lion on VI.306. In this scene, therefore, it is not the lion that takes the place of the sacrificial bull, but the daemon that fulfils the part of the human or divine companion of the lion.

It is important to emphasise that, as with the deer, the lion is never depicted lying upon a sacrificial table or being carried by women, as Bloedow (1992: 304) emphasises. It is also *a priori* unlikely that it would have been possible to capture a lion alive and then restrain it long enough to be sacrificed. Lions, therefore, can be disregarded as sacrificial animals.³⁴⁰

6.5 Find Contexts

Two of the seals discussed in this chapter were deposited in sanctuary contexts, which permits a brief overview of the phenomenon of the votive offering of seals. These are VS.1A.369, which was discovered among the ashes of the altar at the site of the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas near Epidaurus, and the glass seal from Kalapodi. Additionally, II.4.203, depicting a pillar flanked by animals and discussed in 3.2.4, was found in the Dictaeon Cave. Other seals found in sanctuary contexts include three lentoids, two of agate (V.597 and V.599) and one of lapis lazuli (V.600), from the House of the Idols in the Cult Centre at Mycenae. V.597 depicts bull-leaping and V.600 shows two goats. The LH IIIB2 context in which these hard stone lentoids were found

³³⁹ The Neopalatial attestations of this motif were outlined in 2.2.4.

³⁴⁰ Shapland (2010a: 117-120, 123-124; 2010b: 273-289) has recently discussed glyptic lion iconography, with an emphasis on the Cretan evidence; he regards the lion as a prestigious and exotic quarry with which elites wished to form a connection, achieved through the depiction of lions upon seals. Shapland at no point connects lions with sacrificial practices.

provides evidence for the practice of the deposition of heirlooms (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 22). This is additionally indicated by the fact that many of the seals discovered in sanctuary contexts at Phylakopi, such as the soft stone seals VS.1B.39 and VS.1B.42, which depict animals, are abraded, as Younger (1977: 142) notes.³⁴¹ This also demonstrates that seals were not made specifically to be deposited as offerings (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 22); a seal's suitability as a votive lay in its value to its owner, not in its motif. The irrelevance of the motif is additionally indicated by the fact that V.599 above is un-engraved.

The varying quality of the seals discovered in sanctuary contexts could suggest that they were deposited by individuals of differing economic means (Younger, 1977: 142). The House of the Idols provides a clear example of this as the lapis lazuli and agate seals were discovered alongside the glass lentoid V.598.

Turning to burial contexts, the tombs in which seals depicting bulls lying upon a table or women carrying goats or rams have been discovered suggest that both were owned by individuals of high status in LH II-III A. This is consistent with the observations made in 6.2.7 and 6.3.4 regarding their materials in this period. I.264, which depicts a bull upon a table, derives from the second tholos at Tragana; it was found alongside four other hard stone seals.³⁴² Similarly, three lentoids depicting women carrying goats or rams (I.220, I.221, and I.222) were discovered in the cist of the Vapheio tholos with up to twenty-five other seals, in what has been regarded as a 'collection' (Vermeule, 1972: 130). The seals were possibly kept in wooden boxes, traces of which were detectable (Tsountas, 1889: 147-148). Despite the lack of skeletal remains, it has been widely assumed that there was but one, male, occupant of this cist,

³⁴¹ Other seals are damaged: the fluorite lentoid VS.1B.38, also from Phylakopi, has cracked along its string-hole, with the result that only half of the scene, which originally showed a goat, remains.

³⁴² I.265, I.267, and I.268 depict bulls. I.266 is discussed in 3.3.4.

based on the items discovered within. Clearly, the occupant, assuming there was only one, held very high status, indicated by not only the seals but also the large number of imported and valuable items discovered in the tholos that derived from Minoan Crete and beyond (Banou & Hitchcock, 2009: 9). These include silver spoons and vessels from Egypt, Baltic amber, and a necklace consisting of approximately eighty beads (Tsountas, 1889: 146; Cline, 2009: 163, 165). The occupant is, therefore, generally regarded as a ruler, perhaps a *wanax*, as Rehak (1994: 83-84) suggests.

Rehak & Younger (2000: 256-261) contend that the seals discovered in this tomb, as well as those from the second tholoi at Routsis and Tragana, consist of matching pairs.³⁴³ They posit that these were used as simple ‘administrative tokens’, one of which was retained by the owner, the other being given to a junior ‘lieutenant’ as an indication of identity or authority (Rehak & Younger, 2000: 261). However, I do not find their proposed pairings convincing, principally because the criteria used to link the artefacts are too broad.³⁴⁴ Moreover, regarding the seals from pit 3 in the second tholos at Tragana, Rehak & Younger (2000: 258) pair I.264 with I.266, which depicts a tree flanked by animals, on the basis that they both show ‘Minoan ritual motifs’. However, the former is unattested in the Neopalatial Period and I demonstrated in 3.3.7 that the latter is almost entirely restricted to the mainland. These seals, therefore, certainly cannot be paired.

Boardman (1970: 56) more reasonably argues that the occupants of the tombs in which multiple seals have been discovered, such as the Vapheio cist, were purely

³⁴³ In 5.4 I briefly referred to the seals discovered in the second Routsis tholos. These include I.279, which depicts a single woman with architecture. Rehak & Younger (2000: 257-259) also analyse the ten seals discovered in the LH I-II tholos at Kazarma, the six seals from the contemporary tholoi at Gouvalari, and the twelve seals from the Nichoria tholos.

³⁴⁴ This is exemplified by the fact that two seals in Gouvalari tholos I (V.639 and V.641) are formed into a ‘loose pair’ by their ‘lentoid shape’ (Rehak & Younger, 2000: 258), despite the fact that they bear very different scenes and are made of different materials.

concerned with accumulating artefacts that could serve as markers of their status; the motifs they bore were not significant. This was probably generally the case. However, Betts (1981: 8 n.22) emphasises that I.220, I.221, and I.222 are versions in hard stone of a Minoan motif almost exclusively associated with soft stones. These three lentoids are not the only examples of this phenomenon in the tholos: I.260 (a carnelian lentoid) depicts a boars' tusk helmet, which was also restricted to soft stone seals in the Neopalatial Period (Betts, 1981: 8 n.22).³⁴⁵ It is possible that the motifs of these seals were deliberately chosen by their owner. The specifically Minoan motifs perhaps served to emphasise the occupant's links with Crete, which is additionally indicated by the Minoan imports discovered in the tholos, such as the talismanic amygdaloid I.261 (Hood, 1978: 227). Simultaneously, their material emphasises his wealth, manifested in his ability to acquire hard stone seals.

6.6 Conclusions

The motifs discussed in this chapter all depict idealised versions of reality. As such, it is not possible to use the details of the representations, such as whether or not the animals are depicted as alive, in order to propose a reconstruction of the sacrificial ritual. However, regarding the species of animals sacrificed and the roles of men and women, it is likely that they broadly reflect reality. The archaeological, epigraphic, and iconographic data is in agreement that goats, sheep, pigs, and bulls were sacrificed in the Aegean in the LBA. The evidence also agrees that bulls were associated with high status. There is no strong evidence of any class that suggests that deer or lions were sacrificed.

³⁴⁵ The lentoids III.499, IX.I66, and IX.167 provide Neopalatial examples of this motif in soft stone.

It is also possible to draw some conclusions regarding the differing roles of men and women in the sacrificial ritual. The motif of men leading or standing with herbivores is attested in the Neopalatial Period and so is contemporary with that of women carrying goats or rams. This raises the possibility that they could refer to the same ideas, assuming that the former motif is connected with sacrifice. The provision of the goat or ram may have been regarded as a secular, practical activity, which was an appropriate role for a man, such as a shepherd. The transportation of the sacrificed animal, however, could only be undertaken by a member of cult personnel, specifically women, as the animal now belonged to the deity. The lack of representations depicting the moment of sacrifice precludes any firm conclusions regarding the gender of the person who performed the slaughter.

The motifs depicting daemons carrying or leading animals are not securely attested before LM IB. It is possible, therefore, that the iconography of the daemon was briefly augmented in LM/LH II to take over the role of the women carrying the animals and perhaps that of the men who led the animals (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 205). Other scenes, however, such as those of daemons carrying lions, deer, and perhaps bulls, are connected with the iconography of hunting, in which the slaughter of the animals was not ritualised.

It is clear that the motif of women carrying goats or rams originated on Crete in the Neopalatial Period and perhaps as many as half of the instances were engraved in LM I. It was largely restricted to the soft stones that were popular at the time. Upon its transference to the mainland it was subtly altered to depict a different way of holding the animal. It was also once combined with the popular procession theme. However, once divorced from its Neopalatial origins, the number of seals bearing this motif

declined.

In LM/LH II-III the principal motif used to represent animal sacrifice was that of bulls or pigs upon a table. In contrast to the motif depicting the women, it appears widely on the mainland, in addition to Crete. It was almost entirely restricted to hard stones and the valuable bull was by far the most frequently depicted animal, despite the fact that they would have been rarely sacrificed compared to other species. It is likely that these motifs were specifically chosen by their owners, some of whom were buried in rich graves whereas others had administrative roles in the palace at Knossos. The scenes could have alluded to the seal owner's ability to provide a bull for sacrifice, and their involvement in the ritual.

In contrast, in the Neopalatial Period, the only motif clearly connected with sacrifice depicted low status animals (goats and rams) almost exclusively on low status media. It is possible that the number of seals bearing the motif of women carrying goats or rams declined after LM IB/LH IIA as this motif was not linked with sacrifice in a sufficiently explicit manner. Additionally, it was not suited to the depiction of the prestigious bull. Consequently, it did not align with the necessary requirements for markers of status. The theory that certain motifs were selected in order to connote the status of the seal owner is appraised further in the Conclusion.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Appraisal of Methodological Approach

The organisation of the artefacts into groups based on shared iconographic elements has been successful. Moreover, the employment of broad and inclusive groupings has permitted a greater understanding of the motifs' developments. This is exemplified by the inclusion in **4.3.1** of I.128, which may depict a seated man; the exclusion of this ring would have prohibited a clear understanding of the extent of the developments that occurred in the motif of seated women with animals.

Within the sub-groups, the analysis of the individual scenes was necessary to ascertain that each one was associated with the motif under discussion.³⁴⁶ Similarly, at points it has been useful to refer to variants of these motifs, as in **3.2.5**, which to some extent follows the methodology utilised by Wedde (1992: 181-203). The employment of a different organisational principle in Chapter 6 allowed the two core motifs to be considered in their wider iconographic context in order to reach a greater understanding of the representation of animal sacrifice in glyptic.

The use of broad definitions was even more crucial in the identification of Minoan precursors. Not all precursors that have been analysed, such as those in **5.3.5**, clearly represent the motif attested in LM/LH II-III but they were included in order to make clear the extent of the changes that took place after the Neopalatial Period.

³⁴⁶ This point is relevant to **3.5**, in which I concluded that three instances of plants flanked by animals should be separated from the rest of the sub-group on the basis of differences in their iconography.

7.2 The Motifs: Comparative Analysis

7.2.1 Distribution, Materials, and Sphragistic Use of the Motifs in LM/LH II-III³⁴⁷

For the majority of the motifs discussed, most of the provenanced examples derive from the Argolid, with Pylos and Knossos also being well represented. All of the motifs discussed were used sphragistically. The motifs that saw the greatest sphragistic use are those of male and female figures flanked by animals and animals upon a table; the other motifs have only one or two seal-types that are attested in the sealing deposits.³⁴⁸

In 1.3.2 I emphasised that on the mainland in LH I-IIIa glyptic artefacts have only been discovered in rich graves; these artefacts are either gold rings or hard stone seals. The motifs of plants flanked by animals and multiple women with architecture are restricted to these media and all the provenanced examples of both derive from the mainland.³⁴⁹ The latter motif is entirely provenanced, so it can be stated with certainty that no known examples of this motif originated on Crete. Two attestations of the motif of plants flanked by animals, one hard stone lentoid and one gold ring, were discovered in the same tomb at Mycenae.³⁵⁰ This may not be sufficient to prove that some, perhaps many, seal-engravers were also ring engravers, as Younger (1983: 133) suggests, but it clearly indicates that certain motifs were shared between the two media. The motif of

³⁴⁷ The distribution of the motifs on Neopalatial Crete, LM II-III Crete, the LH II-IIIa mainland, and the LH IIIA2/B-C mainland is plotted on four maps on pages 305-307.

³⁴⁸ The motif of male figures flanked by animals saw the most intensive sphragistic use, in terms of the number of seal-types attested (eleven), the number of sealings (twenty-two), and the number of different sites at which it is attested (Knossos, Pylos, Thebes, and Mycenae). That of female figures flanked by animals is attested upon four seal-types, which appear upon seven sealings, and it was used sphragistically at Knossos and Pylos. Finally, four different seal-types depicting animals upon a table appear upon the same number of sealings and it was used sphragistically at Knossos and Mallia.

³⁴⁹ 69% of the attestations of the motif of plants flanked by animals appear upon hard stones; the remaining proportion is associated with gold rings.

³⁵⁰ These are I.60 and I.58 from Tomb 25.

multiple women with architecture is associated only with metal rings, the larger iconographic field offered by a ring being better suited to the rendering of the motif (Krzyszkowska, 2005: 142).³⁵¹ The fact that neither this motif nor that of plants flanked by animals is associated with soft materials indicates that they ceased to be engraved upon artefacts after LM/LH IIIA2, which is consistent with the contexts in which they have been found. The gold rings I.375, VS.1B.354, and I.313, which bear these motifs, survived beyond this date to impress sealings at Pylos and Thebes.

The majority of the attestations of the motif of pillars flanked by animals appear upon hard stone seals and most of the provenanced examples were discovered at Mycenae. Additionally, three seals bearing this motif were discovered on Crete, although only one has a secure provenance. This is the only motif not restricted to the mainland that is not attested in the Knossos sealings, with the exception of that of women carrying animals. It is also the only motif that appears upon a stone of a softer material that derives from a secure mainland context. VS.3.308 from Voula in Attica is made of fluorite and derives from a LH IIIA2-B1 context; these factors indicate that the seal was produced in LH IIIA2 at the earliest. Similarly, the seal-type I.319 from Pylos may have been engraved upon a soft stone lentoid. No examples of this motif are attested in LH II contexts.

The evidence suggests that the floruit of the motif of pillars flanked by animals lay in LH IIIA, when hard stone seals and gold rings were still being produced, and that it developed from that of altars flanked by animals. This latter motif is known only at Knossos and Mycenae and is restricted to hard stone seals. The motif of pillars flanked by animals, in contrast, outlived the decline of the manufacture of hard stone seals and

³⁵¹ One example of multiple women with architecture appears upon a mould for making metal bezels (V.422b); this may represent a LM I version of the motif, as it depicts stationary figures with a structure perhaps utilised in epiphany-conjuring rituals (5.2.45.2.4).

rings in LH IIIA2, as is suggested by VS.3.308 and perhaps I.319, and as is clearly demonstrated by the LH IIIB Lion Gate relief. I tentatively suggest that this can explain why it is not attested in the Knossos sealings, as its floruit as an elite motif post-dated the final destruction of the palace. This is consistent with the fact that its precursor, the motif of altars flanked by animals, *is* attested sphragistically at Knossos but not on the mainland.

The two motifs depicting seated women are widely attested upon gold rings, although they are also associated with hard stones, and they are evenly distributed between the Argolid and Knossos. They are the only motifs that were used sphragistically both at Knossos and on the mainland, with the exception of those of male and female figures flanked by animals.³⁵² All of the artefacts that impressed the mainland sealings can be regarded as LM/LH II-IIIa heirlooms based on their material.

The motif of single figures with architecture is more widely attested on Crete than on the mainland and it appears on hard stone seals and gold rings. It is also twice attested on soft stone lentoids, both of which have been attributed to Crete; it is possible that XII.264 dates to LM I (5.3.4). It is not attested in the mainland sealing deposits or in late burial contexts, suggesting that it did not continue beyond LM/LH IIIa, in terms of its production or sphragistic use.

The only motif that has a high proportion of soft stones is that of women carrying animals. This is to be expected as it is primarily associated with LM I, in which soft stones were widely used. The only attestations of the motif on the mainland appear on hard stones, which, again, is consistent with the trends in material. It is not securely associated with Knossos, although as almost half of the known examples are

³⁵² In addition to Knossos, the motif of seated women with standing figures is attested sphragistically at Pylos, whereas that of seated women with animals appears at Thebes.

unprovenanced it is probable that some originated at that site. It is only attested sphragistically at Pylos.

The motif of animals upon a table is likewise more closely linked with Crete than the mainland. Artefacts bearing this motif were discovered at three Cretan sites outside Knossos, whereas the other motifs are generally attested only once on Crete outside Knossos, if at all. This sub-group contains a large proportion of hard stone seals (79%), most of which derive from the mainland, but such seals were also used sphragistically at Knossos and Mallia; this is the only motif that provides evidence for sphragistic use on Crete outside Knossos after LM IB.

This motif, like that of pillars flanked by animals, also provides evidence of production after LM/LH IIIA2, this time on Crete. VS.1A.59 from Milatos is a glass lentoid; this material was first used for seals in LM/LH IIIA2. The soft stone lentoid VS.1B.230 from Armeni could have been produced in a similar period; both seals derive from late contexts. In contrast, on the mainland there is no evidence for this motif's continuity: it is not associated with soft stones and no sealings bear this motif. Alternatively, VS.1B.3 from Kynos was discovered in the rubble of a LH IIIC building containing magazines and workshops, so it is reasonable to suggest that this seal was used sphragistically in LH IIIB or even LH IIIC and that its associated sealings did not survive.

There is clearer evidence for the continuity beyond LH IIIA2 of the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals. Both are widely attested on hard stone seals;³⁵³ however, both were additionally engraved upon soft stone lentoids used sphragistically at Pylos. That of male figures flanked by animals is additionally

³⁵³ 71% and 86% of the attestations of male and female figures flanked by animals respectively appear upon hard stone seals.

associated with soft stone lentoids in the sealing deposits at Thebes and Mycenae.³⁵⁴

The iconographic analysis of these scenes undertaken in Chapter 2 supports a date of LH IIIA2/B for the artefacts' manufacture. These motifs are also attested in more diverse areas than any other motifs discussed in this thesis. That of male figures flanked by animals is the only motif that appears in the north-western Peloponnese and that depicting female figures is the only one that appears on Rhodes. These two motifs, therefore, are more widely attested than any of the others discussed in this thesis, both geographically and temporally. It is therefore not surprising that they are also the two motifs that provide the greatest evidence of sphragistic use.

The evidence clearly demonstrates that not all sealings from the mainland deposits were impressed by heirlooms, *contra* Pini (1990: 115). There is no evidence that the motifs were connected with the sphragistic use of the artefacts upon which they were engraved. The creation of the impression was significant, not the motif that was used. Moreover, with the exception of the sealings impressed by contemporary soft stone seals, and potentially the Knossos sealings, the person who used the seal or ring sphragistically would not have been the one who chose the motif.

7.2.1.1 *The Use of Specific Stones*

The stone most frequently used to render these motifs is agate, which is associated with almost every motif. The overwhelming majority of the provenanced examples of agate seals were discovered on the mainland, which is consistent with the trend noted in 1.3.1. However, approximately half of the total of agate seals is

³⁵⁴ I.356 from Pylos, I.163 and V.594 from Mycenae, and V.669 from Thebes depict male figures flanked by animals and were engraved upon soft stone seals. I.344 from Pylos, depicting the female figure, was also engraved upon a soft stone lentoid.

unprovenanced. Additionally, four agate seals were excavated on Crete;³⁵⁵ a further two have been attributed to Crete.³⁵⁶ The iconography of II.3.193 (2.2.2), II.3.63 (2.3.1), and VS.1A.75 (5.3.3) is consistent with Cretan glyptic, demonstrating that the use of agate should not always be associated with mainland influence, *contra* Pini (1984: xxv-xxvi).

In contrast, the analysis supports the suggestion, noted in 1.3.1, that lapis lacedaemonius was rarely used on the mainland. The iconography of all five seals of this material discussed in this thesis is consistent with a Cretan origin, although V.201 is clearly influenced by Cypriot glyptic. Haematite was also closely linked with Crete (1.3.1); only one seal of this material has been discovered on the mainland, which bears the Minoan motif of a woman carrying an animal.³⁵⁷ Moreover, one of the few extant Minoan seals (X.268) bearing figured iconography is a haematite cylinder. On the other hand, an example of a male figure grasping his animals, which is not clearly linked with Minoan iconography, as was pointed out in 2.2.5, appears upon a haematite lentoid (IX.153). The correlations between iconography and material, therefore, are limited.

7.2.2 Find Contexts of Seals and Rings and Non-Sphragistic Uses

Only two artefacts discussed in this thesis were discovered in sanctuary contexts.³⁵⁸ It is likely that, as with sphragistic use, the motif was not related to its ultimate function. The seals were deposited because they had value to their owners; as such, any seal could serve as a votive.

³⁵⁵ These are II.3.193, II.3.63, II.4.203, and VS.1A.75.

³⁵⁶ VI.312 and VI.446.

³⁵⁷ Haematite seals discussed in this thesis include IX.115, VI.284, and XIII.39. All are linked with Minoan or later Cretan iconography, but unfortunately none are provenanced.

³⁵⁸ These are II.4.203 and VS.1A.369. Their find contexts were outlined in 6.5.

Turning to burial contexts, in **5.4** I observed that five of the rings depicting multiple women with architecture were associated with female burials.³⁵⁹ Moreover, the greatest hoop diameter among these rings is only 2cm (I.191); the smallest is 1.4cm (V.728). As Younger (1977: 150) and Krzyszkowska (2005: 130 n.38) rightly point out, these rings could most easily have been worn by women.³⁶⁰ It is reasonable to suggest that the other rings bearing this motif were also worn by women. The possible consequences of this theory are addressed below. Other rings depicting women may have been owned by women, as Laffineur (2000: 167) suggests, but in the absence of clear associations between skeletal remains and such rings, this cannot be confirmed.³⁶¹

The possibility that the gender of the figures depicted in the scene did not always reflect that of the artefact's owner is raised by the discovery of three lentoids depicting women carrying animals within the Vapheio tholos cist, which is assumed to have been occupied by a man.³⁶² I argued in **6.5** that the motifs of these seals had been selected by, or for, the occupant of the cist in order to highlight his close links with Minoan Crete. That of I.221 is a close copy in hard stone of the LM I motif, whereas the other two are mainland variations.³⁶³ I.279 from Routsis, which depicts a female figure with architecture, can perhaps likewise be regarded as a variation in hard stone of a predominantly Minoan motif, in which the woman places lilies, rather than a branch, upon the altar. In contrast, the occupant of shaft 3 of the Tragana tholos owned a seal

³⁵⁹ VS.1B.113, VS.1B.114, and VS.1B.115 from Aidonia were associated with the skeletal remains of two women. I.191 from Midea and V.728 from Mega Monastiri derive from burial assemblages that very probably belonged to women.

³⁶⁰ Alternatively, Müller (2005: 172) suggests that rings with a hoop diameter of between 1.4 and 1.7cm could have been worn by either sex, whereas those with a diameter below 1.3cm could only have been worn by women of slim build.

³⁶¹ Tholos A at Archanes provides a clear example of a female burial assemblage that contained rings, in this case five, one of which had been placed upon the woman's breast (Sakellarakis, 1965: 179; Y. & E. Sakellarakis, 1997: 168, 654-655).

³⁶² These lentoids are I.220, I.221, and I.222, all discussed in **0**.

³⁶³ In the main chamber of the tholos were found I.233b, depicting a female figure flanked by animals, which is the only amethyst seal discussed in this thesis, and I.231, depicting a branch flanked by daemons.

depicting a plant flanked by animals (I.266) and a second showing a bull upon a table (I.264), both of which originated in LM/LH II and were associated with high status, as was established in 3.3.7 and 6.2.7. I argue that in each case these motifs were selected by their owners and that they elevated the status of the seals upon which they were engraved, enhancing their suitability as markers of elite rank.

Finally, the gold rings I.126, I.127, and I.128 all derive from the same pit in a tomb at Mycenae. All three rings can be regarded as variations of Minoan themes.³⁶⁴ I.128 combines the motif of seated women with animals with that of leashed griffins, whereas I.127 could perhaps be viewed as an antithetic arrangement of the motif of single figures with architecture. This clearly indicates that members of the elite at Mycenae were aware of Minoan iconography and that they were actively modifying it.

Of the motifs discussed in this thesis, only those of male and female figures flanked by animals can be clearly associated with apotropaic properties. The evidence from the positioning of I.144 and I.145 in the tomb at Mycenae is not entirely convincing. However, both motifs derived from the Near East, where seals bearing these motifs had talismanic functions; therefore, it is highly likely that this function also transferred to the Aegean (0). Moreover, the iconography of the motifs is consistent with an apotropaic use; one could imagine that the dominance possessed by the central figure could be transferred to the owner. The theory that they had special functions would also explain why they have the widest geographical distribution, in addition to their continuity of production and sphragistic use into LH IIIB. This indicates that sphragistic and apotropaic uses were not mutually exclusive.

³⁶⁴ I.126 has been referred to at numerous points in this thesis, as in 5.2.5.

It is possible that the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals had subtly different uses from each other, as is suggested by the fact that they have different string-hole orientations. Lentoids bearing the latter motif have the common vertical orientation, whereas those depicting female figures utilise the rarer horizontal orientation. The only other motif discussed in this thesis for which this orientation is the norm is that of women carrying animals.³⁶⁵ Similarly, the majority of the lentoids that depict seated women have horizontal string-holes.³⁶⁶ This establishes a link between the depiction of women and the horizontal orientation; such consistency raises the possibility that the seals with this orientation were more frequently owned by women.³⁶⁷ Younger (1977: 154) observes that this orientation would have been better suited to the seal's use on a necklace as this would provide the correct orientation of the motif, although he notes that seals with vertical string-holes also appeared on necklaces.

7.3 Interpreting Glyptic Iconography

7.3.1 Criteria for Ascertaining the Religious Nature of a Scene

This section assesses the usefulness of the criteria that were outlined in 1.4 and proposes additions. It also summarises the conclusions reached regarding the origin or development of these different elements.

³⁶⁵ The popularity of the horizontal orientation for seals depicting female figures flanked by animals was first observed by Wace (1932: 200). Younger (1988: xv) notes that the horizontal orientation only occurs with certain scenes, but suggests that it was associated with humans as opposed to animals; he does not comment on the gender of the figures.

³⁶⁶ Lentoids with horizontal string-holes that depict seated women include VI.283 and VI.284.

³⁶⁷ A similar suggestion was made by Hägg & Lindau (1984: 77), who posit that certain seals depicting female figures flanked by animals were worn by priestesses.

7.3.1.1 *Architectural Elements*

An element that securely designates a scene as possessing cult significance is the horns of consecration. The horns are never associated with tree-shrines in Neopalatial iconography and they do not appear atop the later mainland variations of tree-shrines on VS.1B.114 and I.119. This demonstrates that horns of consecration are not an integral part of all cult buildings in iconography. In LM I and later periods horns of consecration are represented on buildings that can be identified as palaces, as on II.8.272 and the scenes described in 5.2.1-2. They are also associated with the stepped structures and altars of different forms.

Horns of consecration can also indicate whether a building or smaller structure is represented, as I demonstrated in Chapter 5. The analysis undertaken in this chapter has greatly increased the understanding of cult architecture, by identifying five prominent classes and outlining their functions. The presence of any of these classes within a scene is sufficient to link it with cult.

Incurved altars in Neopalatial glyptic can be regarded as secure indications of cult significance. In LM/LH II-III A, however, they principally feature as bases for significant elements (3.4). In the few scenes in which they are topped with horns of consecration they function as cult indicators. However, they also support the forelegs of animals in antithetic arrangements in which no additional cult markers are present. Columnar altars appear in identical contexts in which they can only be regarded as pedestals. Incurved altars, therefore, are not secure indicators of cult; they should more properly be labelled as incurved bases.

Freestanding pillars most frequently appear in LM/LH II-III A as the focus of antithetic animal groups, where they can symbolise palatial authority and perhaps more

broadly the *oikos* (3.2.6). Pillars were selected to serve this function due to their structural connotations and their association with Minoan religion. As such, they were not interchangeable with any other central foci, such as anthropomorphic figures or trees, as they served their own unique function. Pillars once appear as floating symbols in a scene with animals (3.2.5), in an identical context to figure-of-eight shields, suggesting that they too could be reduced to fillers (see below). Freestanding pillars, therefore, cannot be regarded as cult markers, but they can indicate that a scene possesses a symbolic value.

7.3.1.2 *Fantastic Creatures*

The presence of antithetic daemons strongly suggests a connection with cult (2.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.3.1). Moreover, the few scenes that depict daemons leading bulls can tentatively be linked with sacrifice. However, daemons also appear in secular contexts. They are sometimes portrayed in equivalent positions to human hunters, carrying their prey; this is a purely secular role as hunting was not related to the sacrificial ritual (6.4). Griffins and lions are also unclear indicators of a religious nature. They appear to have been largely interchangeable, with the exception that the former are far more frequently associated with female figures, in antithetic arrangements and in other contexts. Griffins and lions are certainly indicators of high status and the fact that they rarely flank plants was used in 3.3.8 to demonstrate that these central foci were not interchangeable with pillars. The presence of these creatures can only securely link a scene with the cult sphere through their interactions with anthropomorphic figures, which are discussed below.

The appearance of a monkey acting as a human, on the other hand, is a secure indication of cult (4.3.2). However, these creatures occur rarely in LM/LH II-III A glyptic and are never depicted in antithetic arrangements in this period, indicating that they served very different functions to other animals. Similarly, sphinxes are rarely attested in glyptic. In the one scene in which they appear they are more indicative of the motif's foreign origins than its links with cult.

7.3.1.3 *Plants*

Naturalistic trees, which may be olive-trees, are frequently depicted in Neopalatial glyptic as enclosed within a flat or stepped structure and being grasped in epiphany-conjuring rituals; from this use they could also function as cult markers, indicating the place at which the deity appeared (4.2.4). Naturalistic trees rarely occur in cult scenes in glyptic in LM/LH II-III A; when they do, they are separated from the architecture with which they were originally associated, as on I.123, VS.1B.114, and VI.279. In these contexts they confirm the link with cult. The stylised trees that appear in antithetic arrangements are likely not associated with religion, as is additionally suggested by the fact that the trees that had been depicted in epiphany-conjuring rituals never appear in the central position.

The only tree that appears in cult contexts in multiple scenes in LM/LH II-III A glyptic is the palm. However, palms are never a diagnostic feature in establishing a link with cult and they most frequently appear in secular scenes of animals. The analysis in 3.3.3 also ascertained that they are never securely linked with epiphanies; they cannot be used to demonstrate that the figures with which they appear are divine. They are more indicative of the date in which the artefact was engraved.

Branches were frequently depicted rising from between horns of consecration in Neopalatial iconography (5.3.2, 5.3.3). In 5.3.2 I suggested that this led to the representation of branches independently of horns of consecration in LM/LH II-III A, as is evidenced by I.231, the Tiryns Daemon Ring, I.127, and II.3.7. These branches, therefore, can also be regarded as indicators of cult, but only in combination with other factors.

7.3.1.4 *Additional Elements*

The figure-of-eight shield, sacral knot, and impaled triangle have been encountered at several points in this thesis. The two former elements are both based upon larger, physical objects that were connected with epiphany rituals in the Neopalatial Period. The figure-of-eight shield served an analogous function to the boulder, whereas the sacral knot was based upon a garment that was carried in rituals and probably presented to a priestess (3.2.4). In Neopalatial glyptic, the presence of either of these elements can link a scene with cult. However, in LM/LH II both elements were transformed into floating symbols.³⁶⁸ A transitional phase can be observed in the sacral knot's evolution, in which it was depicted hanging from other elements, such as pillars (VI.364) or chairs (the Tiryns Daemon Ring). The impaled triangle was likewise based upon a real object, very probably a bladed weapon, but it was less obviously connected with religion in the Neopalatial Period (3.4.1). It may have served as a symbol of status, a memory of which is perhaps retained in 3.4.1I.73.

This analysis supports Krzyszkowska's (2005: 208-209) view of these three elements as decorative fillers, which means that they cannot be utilised to link a scene

³⁶⁸ Larger figure-of-eight shields are sometimes depicted; these are to be understood as being hung upon walls, rather than as floating (5.3.1).

with cult. There is no evidence that the original significance of the objects upon which the figure-of-eight shield and sacral knot were based was retained. They do appear in some scenes possessing cult significance but these examples are rare and they simply serve as fillers. Moreover, some circles are sometimes misread as figure-of-eight shields on soft stone and glass lentoids.³⁶⁹

Floating symbols of a different class appear in a small number of Cretan scenes depicting seated women. These include the seed and branch-like element, both of which were associated with Neopalatial epiphany rituals. In LM II, however, they appear in subtly different contexts, highlighting the presence of the goddess herself rather than an enacted or ecstatic epiphany (4.2.1, 4.3.2). On the mainland, Near Eastern celestial symbols appear in identical contexts and may serve the same function (4.2.1).

The double axe only appeared twice in this thesis: in conjunction with an element of Minoan origin (the frames) and in a scene inspired by Minoan iconography (the Great Goddess Ring). In contrast to the pillar and, to a lesser extent, the figure-of-eight shield and sacral knot, this Minoan symbol was not transformed in LM/LH II, instead being largely rejected from glyptic scenes of a religious nature, as Krzyszkowska (2005: 256) observes.

7.3.2 Criteria for Ascertaining the Divinity of a Figure

7.3.2.1 Control over Fantastic and Powerful Creatures

In Chapter 2 I appraised the theory that figures that are flanked by, and therefore control, fantastic and powerful creatures are deities. This criterion has two aspects: the species of the animals and the manner in which the control is manifested. Regarding the

³⁶⁹ Circles appear on VS.3.308 and VS.1A.59.

latter, **2.1.1** identified four different levels of control, which are applied to a wide range of species.³⁷⁰ It is therefore unlikely that the different levels of interaction convey different messages regarding the central figure's divinity; they in fact refer to the level of Near Eastern or Minoan influence present (**2.2.5, 2.3.4**).

The second aspect is the species. In **2.2.1** I accepted Rehak's (1995b: 223) contention that daemons can flank high status males in addition to deities. Similarly, figures that dominate creatures such as lions and griffins are not necessarily divine (Thomas & Wedde, 2001: 9). However, this does not preclude an interpretation of the figures as gods; that on V.201 is certainly a god (**2.2.1**). Moreover, in the antithetic arrangement, there is no clear correlation between the species of animal depicted and other aspects of the scene. In other words, it is not sound to regard figures flanked by terrestrial and domestic creatures as potentially of different status to those flanked by lions or daemons.

A third aspect must be taken into account regarding the divinity of male and female figures flanked by animals, which is the motifs' origins. The two principal motifs that influenced that of female figures flanked by animals only depicted goddesses, whereas those from which the motif of male figures flanked by animals derived represented high status and semi-divine figures. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the motif's background in order to reach a sound interpretation of its significance.

The ability to control animals, many of which are fantastic or powerful, is also demonstrated by several seated women; these scenes are discussed in more detail below.

³⁷⁰ This is exemplified by the fact that daemons, for example, are depicted both lifted off the floor and left to stand peacefully.

7.3.2.2 *Attributes*

The presence of the frames above the heads of several women flanked by animals is a further indication of their divinity; they can be regarded as a divine attribute. The frames are a purely iconographic construct based upon bulls' horns and they reinforced the message of the antithetic motif, that is, that the central women are goddesses who have dominance over the wild (2.3.2). The fact that they are not associated with male figures flanked by animals perhaps supports the interpretation of these figures as powerful mortals rather than gods.

7.3.2.3 *Being Seated*

Sitting upon an item of cult equipment, such as stepped structures, is sufficient to designate a figure as a deity, as Wedde (1992: 195-196) suggested, as is *standing* upon cult equipment (2.1.1). Seated women that are targeted with gestures or actions by standing figures can also safely be regarded as divine (Wedde, 1992: 195-196), as can those that are attended by daemons or monkeys acting as humans (4.3.1-2). The dominance over the creatures is not as evident as in the antithetic arrangement, but the ability to exist peacefully with terrestrial creatures, in combination with being seated, can be regarded as sufficient to interpret these women as goddesses. Moreover, in the scenes with these creatures the landscape of the scene suggests a link with cult (4.3.2). I am hesitant to state that being seated in itself is sufficient to identify a deity, but the seated women discussed in this study do not appear in any contexts inconsistent with such an identification.

Chapter 4 proposed criteria to aid in distinguishing between scenes that depict priestesses performing an enacted epiphany ritual in which they represent the goddess,

and those that show goddesses in emblematic scenes that do not relate to real rituals. It suggested that enacted epiphany rituals are less widely represented in glyptic than is often assumed.

7.3.2.4 Gesture

In **4.2.1** I accepted the argument of scholars such as Hallager (1985: 31-32) and Younger (1992: 264) that the commanding gesture is an indication of high status and not of divinity. This study has not revealed any exclusively divine gestures. The usefulness of gesture as an indicator of a figure's status is considered in more detail below.

7.3.2.5 Conclusions

It is clear that the context in which the different elements appear is very significant, as Thomas & Wedde (2001: 9) stress. For both sets of criteria, the higher the number of elements present, the stronger the possibility that religious significance or a deity is present. The background of the motif should also be taken into account. Additionally, the likelihood of a scene's religious significance or a figure's divinity can be increased through comparison with scenes that display a similar combination of elements.³⁷¹

7.3.3 Criteria for Ascertaining the Mortality of a Figure

The analysis has demonstrated that there is not one unified gesture associated with mortal participants in a scene. Gestures utilised include one hand raised to the face

³⁷¹ An example of this was encountered in **6.2.2**, in which the presence of horns of consecration on II.6.173 served to strengthen the connection between the motif of animals upon a table and cult.

and the other lowered,³⁷² both hands raised to the face,³⁷³ one arm raised in a salute,³⁷⁴ one arm raised towards the face but kept at a distance and the other placed on the hip,³⁷⁵ and the commanding gesture.³⁷⁶ With the exception of the latter, none of these gestures have been employed by figures identified as deities in the scenes discussed. However, the gesture used is usually linked with the activity being performed, such as walking in procession or presenting (or receiving) offerings; it is these activities that identify the figures as mortals or deities. Moreover, on X.261 and I.101 the gestures of the mortal males and seated goddesses are mirrored, indicating that figures of both statuses can employ the same gestures. The analysis supports Wedde's (1999: 918) suggestion that each adorant was free to signal their recognition of the deity with whichever gesture they felt appropriate. As with the criteria outlined above, comparisons with other scenes can be beneficial: identical gestures that appear in similar contexts can be of use in identifying a figure's status, as was demonstrated in 5.2.1 and 5.3.5.

7.4 Glyptic Iconography as a Source for Religious Practices

7.4.1 Motifs That Possess a Religious Nature

Four different categories of scenes can be discerned:

- Motifs that depict a deity:
 - Female figures flanked by animals.
 - Some instances of male figures flanked by animals.³⁷⁷
 - Seated women with animals.

³⁷² This is utilised by the male figure on V.199. The women on I.86 use a similar gesture.

³⁷³ Used by both women on I.127.

³⁷⁴ Used by the central woman on I.108 and the standing woman on VS.1A.75.

³⁷⁵ This is used by the women on V.728.

³⁷⁶ The standing man on XI.28 utilises this gesture, as does that on the Poros Ring.

³⁷⁷ This includes V.201, and perhaps other scenes.

- Motifs that depict the interaction between deities and mortals:
 - Seated women with standing figures.
- Motifs that depict or allude to the performance of religious rituals:
 - Multiple figures with architecture.
 - Single figures with architecture.
 - Animals upon a table.
 - Women carrying animals.
 - Some instances of seated women with standing figures.
- Motifs that do not depict deities or religious rituals but that utilise religious iconography:
 - Pillars flanked by animals.
 - Altars flanked by animals.
 - Some instances of plants flanked by animals.³⁷⁸

7.4.2 Religious Practices: Relationship between Glyptic and Reality

The following analysis considers each of the five motifs listed in the third category above, in order to reach a conclusion regarding their relationship with real religious practices. Correlations with mural iconography are also considered.

7.4.2.1 Figures with Architecture, Seated Women, Processions, and Dance

The glyptic evidence suggests that processions were performed by women who often carried as offerings flowers or branches. These could be offered to a seated woman, as on the Great Goddess Ring, or deposited upon an altar. An analysis of the

³⁷⁸ These instances are I.231, I.123, and perhaps VI.310 (3.5).

architecture identified the entranceways and the more complex architecture on I.191 as referring to a palatial setting. There is no reason to doubt that these scenes refer to real rituals, as is indicated by the correlations with mural iconography, in which flowers are also depicted being carried in processions, and archaeological remains (**5.2.1**).

None of the figures are depicted carrying jewellery. Libations are only depicted as offerings in the Minoan and later Cretan examples.³⁷⁹ The fact that the offering of libations is omitted from the motif of multiple women with architecture, which is an elite motif, suggests either that libations were a less desirable offering than flowers, or that the latter, in particular lilies, had a special significance. The seated women that are the termini of processions or the recipients of offerings are regarded as goddesses but this does not require theories of enacted epiphanies. The real processions may not necessarily have led to a seated woman acting as a goddess; they may have terminated in her sanctuary, thus the representation in iconography demonstrated what the ritual hoped to achieve.

The rituals depicted are based in reality, but in **5.2.1** I argued that the landscape that includes rocks and flowers, in addition to paving, as on VS.1B.113, was inspired by the Neopalatial idea of a cult landscape and not by the real setting of the rituals. Rocks and flowers are depicted in the same contexts as the later examples, that is, being sat upon by goddesses or appearing at the base of architecture in the case of the former, as in the Minoan precursors cited in **4.2.4** and **5.3.5**.³⁸⁰ In these instances they probably refer to the real setting of the rituals depicted, such as enacted epiphany rituals. This led to their use as generic markers of a cult, rather than real, landscape. The architecture in

³⁷⁹ The offering of libations to a seated woman is depicted upon II.7.8 and II.8.268. The figure on II.3.7 offers libations to an altar.

³⁸⁰ Rocky and wild cult landscapes also appear upon the Zakros Sanctuary Rhyton and in the wall-paintings from the House of the Frescoes at Knossos (**3.3.6**) and Room 14 of the villa at Ayia Triadha (**4.3.4**).

scenes such as VS.1B.114 serves the same function (5.2.4).

Other scenes may be further removed from real rituals. Generally, the standing figures that accompany seated women in LM/LH II-III A glyptic, especially male figures, are empty-handed. These scenes therefore cannot be regarded as representing the presentation of offerings. In 4.2.4 I accepted Sourvinou-Inwood's (1989b: 249) suggestion that the purpose of these scenes was to emphasise the male figures' close connection with the deity, which is one of the criteria of an elite motif outlined in 1.3.4. This is confirmed by the appearance of the shaft on I.101, which is connected with divine authority, as Palaima (1995: 136) demonstrated. That these scenes do not represent real rituals is additionally suggested by the exclusion of indicators of landscape and the appearance of elements that derive from iconographic prototypes rather than reality.

A further ritual potentially depicted in scenes discussed in this thesis is the dance. I identified two dancing gestures that occur in scenes of figures with architecture, one of which is restricted to the Minoan precursors. The other occurred only twice, in conjunction with multiple women, in one instance combined with a procession in which one of the 'dancing' figures carries flowers. It is likely that the emphasis was upon the procession; this gesture may have been used to convey the figures' movement.³⁸¹ These scenes, therefore, cannot provide information regarding the significance of the dance on the mainland in LH II-III A.

³⁸¹ The central woman on VS.1B.115 is less obviously moving in a procession, although her companions clearly are.

7.4.2.2 *Animal Sacrifice*

The ritual of animal sacrifice, as depicted in glyptic, consists of three parts: the transportation of the sacrificial animal, processions, and the placement of the sacrificial animal upon a table. A sacrificial procession is probably depicted on II.8.480, as well as in the wall-painting from Pylos and on the Ayia Triadha Sarcophagus (6.2.2, 6.2.3). Processions were therefore suitable rituals for a wide range of scenarios.

The motif of animals, specifically bulls and pigs, upon a table is the only one that can be clearly correlated with epigraphic and archaeological evidence. Nonetheless, despite the fact that this motif is based in reality, it does not accurately depict the details of the ritual. This motif does not demonstrate that a bull was slaughtered upon a table; the whole bull represents the portions of meat that were in reality placed upon an offering table. Similarly, while goats and sheep were very probably sacrificed in the Neopalatial Period, it is highly unlikely that they were carried by the women in the manner depicted in glyptic. This motif may have indicated that the animal was in the possession of the goddess. More realistic are the scenes of standing men with herbivores, which could have alluded to the offering of animals by their owners.

7.4.3 **Temporal Developments in the Iconography of Religious Practices**

Two of the motifs outlined above (those of multiple women with architecture and animals upon a table) do not have Minoan precursors. Processions were certainly performed in the Neopalatial Period. However, the depiction of the carrying of flowers in LH II-III A, as opposed to equipment connected with epiphany rituals, provides a further instance of the restriction of the latter rituals to Crete, particularly in the Neopalatial Period.

The motif of multiple women with architecture is clearly linked with the mainland elite, as is demonstrated by the find contexts, materials, and patterns of distribution. I noted in 1.3.4 that one of the methods in which individuals could demonstrate their high status was by stressing their close links with religious rituals in addition to palatial authority. Moreover, I argued above that the rings bearing this motif were owned by women. Linking the women depicted in the scenes with those who owned the rings, this motif can be regarded as demonstrating the owners' close connection with religious rituals in addition to palatial authority, as several scenes allude to palatial architecture. The motif would have demonstrated the owners' involvement in, or their entitlement to be involved in, such rituals. The element of display additionally explains why the motif is restricted to gold rings, upon which the motif is clearly visible.³⁸² This motif is only attested once sphragistically, at Pylos; this ring was certainly an heirloom and by LH IIIB2 may no longer have been owned by a female member of the elite.

The motif of animals upon a table is likewise unattested in the Neopalatial Period. However, there is evidence for animal sacrifice in the Neopalatial Period and it is *a priori* likely that bulls were sacrificed in addition to the goats and rams that are depicted being carried by priestesses. This motif was also connected with the elite, but its origins may lie on Crete, specifically Knossos. Bulls were clearly the most prestigious sacrificial offering; the depiction of this animal upon an offering table on a seal or ring alludes to the owner's ability to provide such an offering and additionally demonstrates the owner's connection with religious rituals. The method of display of this motif was sphragistic, at least on Crete; it may have been developed against a

³⁸² K. Galanakis (2005: 3) similarly suggested that gold rings in LH II-III A were intended to be viewed in original.

background of elite competition at Knossos. The connection with Crete is emphasised by the fact that the motif continued into LM IIIA-B, but bulls were not depicted beyond LM/LH IIIA, being only associated with high status media.

The appearance of a new motif, therefore, does not necessarily indicate the development of new rituals. Similarly, the termination of the production of a motif does not always indicate that the associated rituals have ceased, although this is very probably the case regarding the epiphany rituals. I observed above that the motif of single figures with architecture is not securely attested in LM/LH IIIA and that it is more closely associated with Crete than the mainland. The possibility that the deposition of offerings upon an altar was not represented in LM/LH IIIA does not indicate that the ritual did not continue into later periods; continuity is suggested by the discovery of rectangular altars in late contexts (1.5). It is possible that this motif was rejected in favour of those that more clearly presented either the relationship between the votary and the deity (that of seated women with standing figures), which is only implied in the deposition of offerings, or the connection with the palace, as is illustrated in some instances of the motif of multiple women with architecture.

These motifs, therefore, do not accurately reflect the rituals performed in the time in which the artefacts upon which they were engraved were produced, but they do demonstrate the changing significance of those rituals.

7.5 Wider Significance

7.5.1 Foreign Contacts

The evidence of foreign influence provided by the analysis of the selected motifs is consistent with the wider pattern of interconnections between the Aegean, Near East,

and Cyprus in the LBA observed by Cline (2009: 9-10, 50, 61). The focus of Near Eastern influence is initially Crete, where the antithetic arrangement arrived in LM IB. This is the most prominent and pervasive instance of Near Eastern influence discussed in this thesis. It was used to render the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals. The latter has some Minoan precursors but its iconography only fully formed in LM/LH II, when the antithetic arrangement became more widespread in the Aegean. Near Eastern influence is also evidenced in the more forceful interaction between the figures and animals, which is more frequently attested on the mainland but it is known on Crete. The adoption of these motifs was facilitated by the existence of two motifs in Neopalatial glyptic that carried similar messages of control over animals (**2.2.5**, **2.3.4**).

Regarding the motifs of pillars and altars flanked by animals, the Near Eastern evidence is manifested in the antithetic arrangement only. The motif of plants flanked by animals, however, is more clearly indebted to Near Eastern glyptic; indeed, I suggested in **3.3.7** that its suitability as an elite motif lay in its popularity in that region. The significance of its foreign origins is demonstrated by the fact that in two instances a foreign central focus was used. By having this motif engraved upon a seal or ring, the owner would have been indicating their awareness of foreign trends; the motif therefore served to some extent the same function as exotica.

Near Eastern influence in LM/LH II is also evidenced by the floating celestial elements that sometimes accompany seated women (**4.2.1**, **4.3.1**). These are different to those that appear in the Neopalatial Period in association with epiphany rituals, although they may serve a similar function. These elements are generally restricted to the mainland. A more tentative instance of Near Eastern influence resides in the placement

of the Minoan frames above the heads of women in LM/LH II, which may have been inspired by the parallel use of horned headdresses as divine attributes in the Near East.

The Near Eastern influence shifted to the mainland in LH IIIB, when seals depicting male and female figures flanked by animals were still being produced. Cypriot influence can be detected from LM/LH IIIA, being evident in the iconography of the male figures flanked by animals on V.201 and V.675. LH IIIB marks the height of Cypriot influence, as is demonstrated by V.669; Thebes was clearly the focus of this influence. It is possible that contact in LH IIIB with the Near East and Cyprus, in which the motif of male figures flanked by animals was common, was a factor in the continuity of this motif.

7.5.2 Relationship between Minoan and Mycenaean Religious Iconography

The changes in the iconography of the eleven selected motifs have been summarised in the conclusions of each of the preceding chapters. It remains for me to outline the overall patterns of diachronic changes.

In LM/LH II, the motifs of male and female figures flanked by animals became popular on both Crete and the mainland.³⁸³ On Crete, the motif of bulls upon a table probably originated at Knossos and the motifs of seated women continued to be popular. The affectionate relationship between the seated women and animals was retained but more powerful species were depicted. Standing figures continued to present the women with offerings; in one instance the standing figure is a man. Continuity is clearest in the motif of single figures with architecture, which underwent few changes from the

³⁸³ Additionally, in this period the sacral knot and figure-of-eight shield, which were previously associated with epiphany rituals, were transformed into floating symbols.

Neopalatial Period. The continuity of iconography on Crete was facilitated by the survival of specific artefacts, the clearest instance of which was cited in 4.2.4.

On the mainland, the Neopalatial motifs that had been developed to render real rituals, such as those connected with the epiphany, were transformed to emphasise the status of both the figures depicted and the artefacts' owners. In LH II-III A, many members of the elite owned hard stone seals or gold rings, so the development of new iconography was required to elevate the status of the artefact upon which it was engraved. This iconography had its foundation in that of the Neopalatial Period. The idea of a cult landscape, for example, was retained; however, the landscape was more frequently omitted, indicating that the scenes were now less closely linked to reality.³⁸⁴ The motif of single figures with architecture underwent very little modification; however, it is not attested in any form after LH III A. Similarly rejected was the motif of women carrying animals; neither of these motifs fulfilled the elite's desire for markers of status.

Regarding the figures depicted, the dominance of the seated goddess over fantastic creatures was emphasised. The goddesses were also more frequently depicted with high status males, emphasising the status of the latter. These scenes no longer related to a real ritual and Near Eastern floating symbols were substituted for those associated with epiphanies in Neopalatial glyptic.

The pillar provides a clear example of the transformation of a Minoan religious symbol. The fact that it was selected as an emblem of palatial authority indicates that the Mycenaeans understood its significance. The floruit of this motif in LH III A

³⁸⁴ The only clear indication of the landscape included is the palatial entranceway.

additionally demonstrates that innovations were still being made in the glyptic repertoire in this period.

In addition to modifying Neopalatial motifs and elements, the Mycenaeans also created two new motifs, which were employed as emblems of status. That of plants flanked by animals was largely imported from the Near East but the antithetic arrangement was also applied to indigenous vegetal elements. The motif of women with architecture provided the Mycenaeans with an opportunity to develop new architectural forms.³⁸⁵

The importance of demonstrating status should not be emphasised at the expense of religion, however. Moreover, the enduring popularity of the motif of male and female figures flanked by animals lay not in its ability to denote status but in its talismanic functions.

7.6 Final Conclusions

This thesis has presented a detailed analysis of five glyptic themes. The link between these themes and religion has been examined through the development and clarification of criteria to identify both scenes of a religious nature and deities. It has demonstrated that, while all the motifs relate to religious iconography or practices, not every attestation, or element, of the eleven motifs possessed a religious nature.

It is clear that glyptic iconography provides an indication of the rituals that were performed in the period in which the artefacts bearing the motifs were manufactured. However, as has been established during this thesis, it cannot be used to reconstruct the details or narratives of religious rituals. Additionally, changes in glyptic iconography

³⁸⁵ New classes of architecture include the entranceway and the tree-shrine variations, both of which are modifications, to a greater or lesser extent, of Minoan prototypes.

are not reliable or accurate reflections of real developments in religious practices. However, I argue that it is far more significant *because* it does not depict reality: it portrays the imagery that the seal or ring owner wished to present. As such, glyptic iconography provides information regarding the changing attitudes towards different rituals, as well as the different ways in which Minoan religious iconography was employed on the Mycenaean mainland.

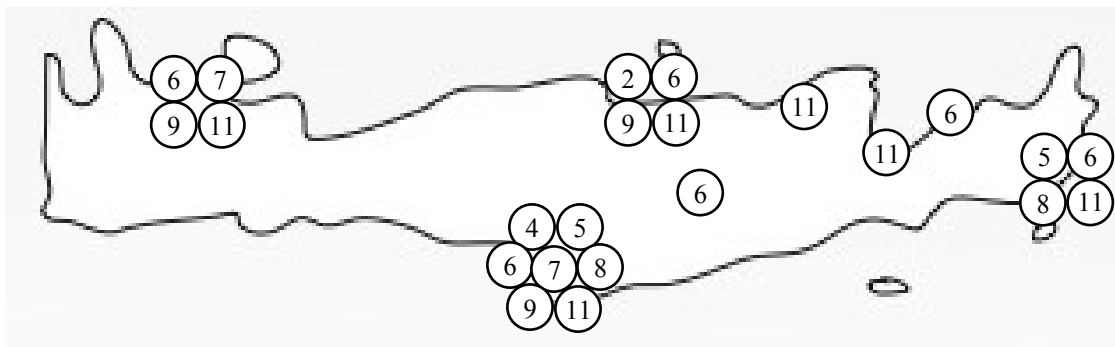
Additionally, this thesis has emphasised the Mycenaeans' contribution to the glyptic repertoire. The Mycenaeans did not simply copy Neopalatial glyptic iconography, but instead transformed it to suit their own, differing, needs. Moreover, the methodological approach employed in this thesis to detect developments that occurred in LM/LH II-III has been successful and could be applied to other motifs in glyptic, and also potentially to other media. Finally, this thesis has clearly demonstrated the value of glyptic iconography as a source for understanding the relations between Minoan Crete and the Mycenaean mainland, by showing that it reflects aspects of this relationship and its developments throughout the LBA.

MAPS

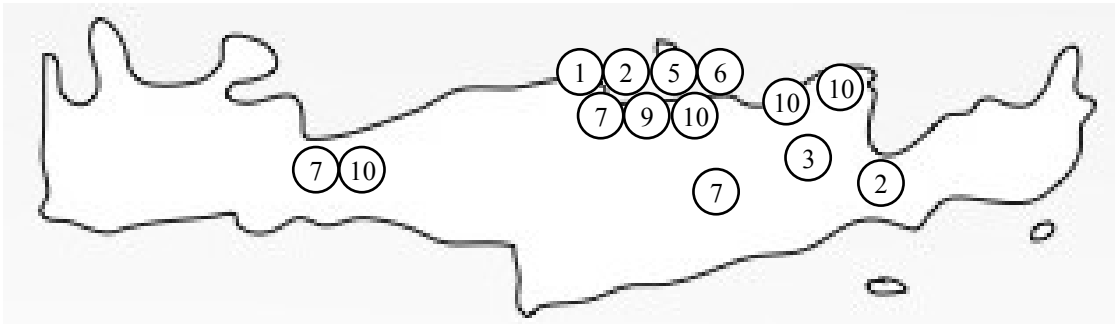
Key to Maps

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 = Male Figures Flanked by Animals | 7 = Seated Women with Animals |
| 2 = Female Figures Flanked by Animals | 8 = Multiple Standing Figures with Architecture |
| 3 = Pillars Flanked by Animals | 9 = Single Standing Figures with Architecture |
| 4 = Plants Flanked by Animals | 10 = Animals upon a Table |
| 5 = Altars Flanked by Animals | 11 = Women Carrying Animals |
| 6 = Seated Women with Standing Figures | |

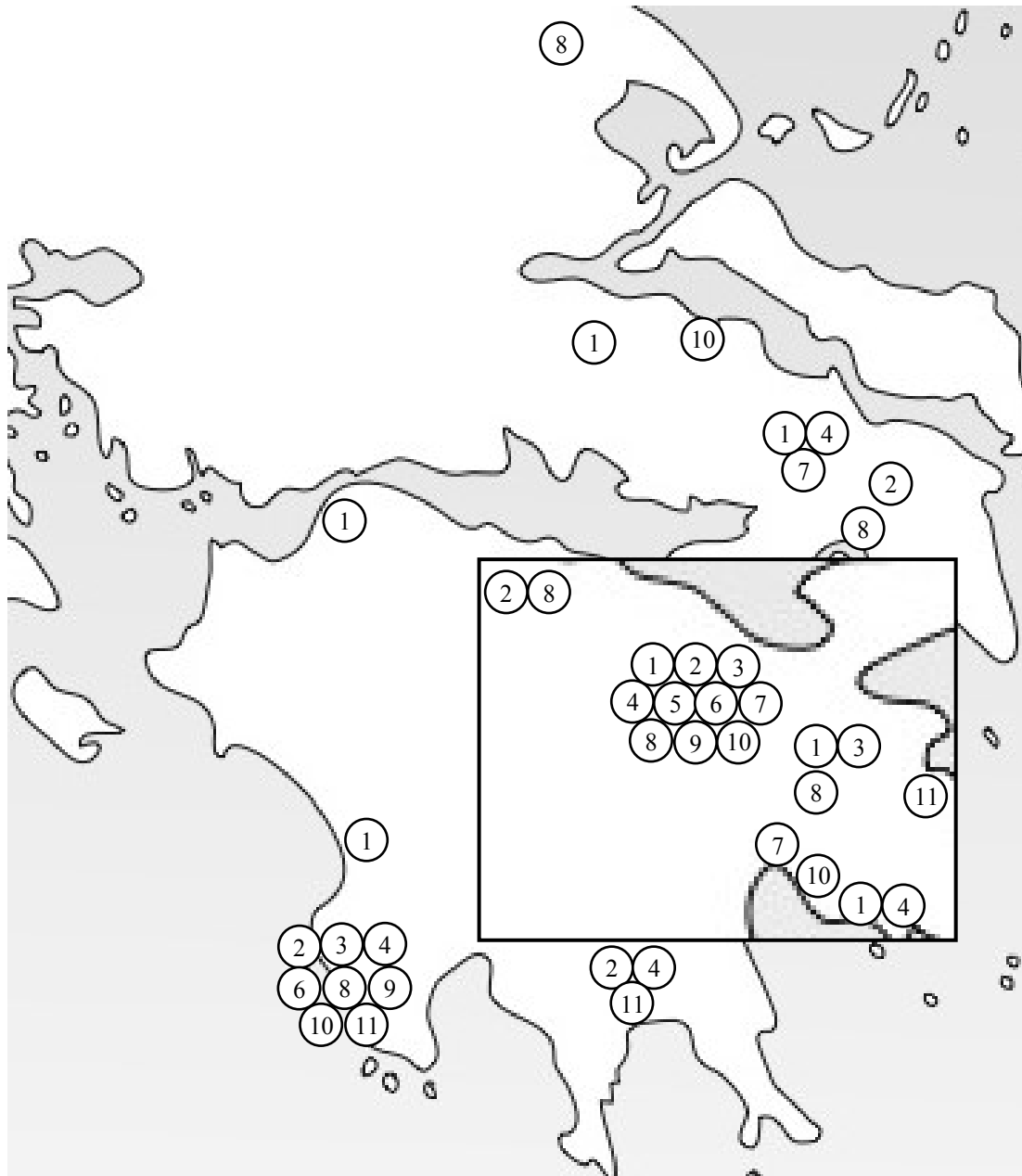
Map 1: Distribution of the Eleven Motifs on Neopalatial Crete



Map 2: Distribution of the Eleven Motifs on LM II-III Crete

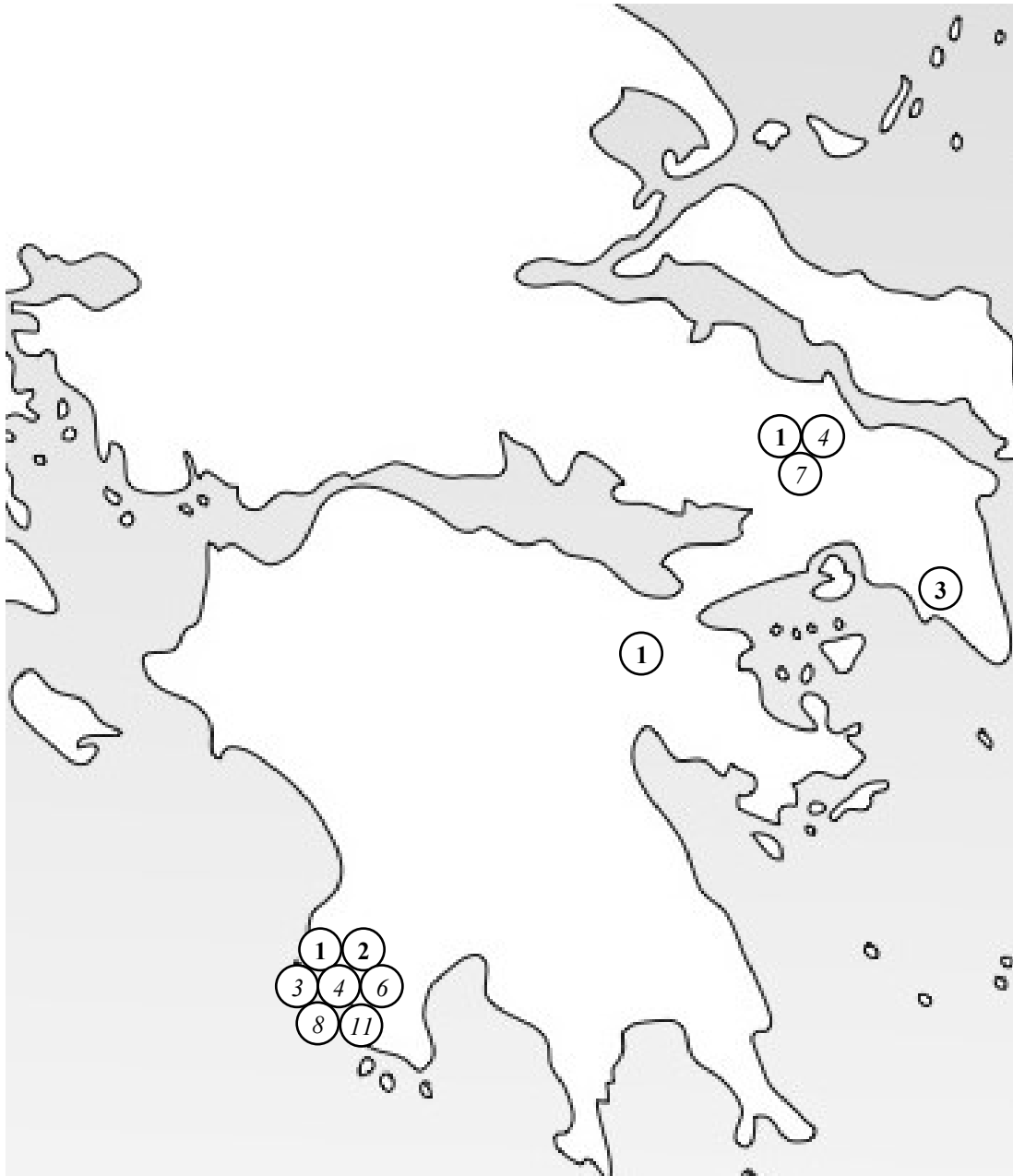


Map 3: Distribution of the Eleven Motifs on the LH II-III A Mainland³⁸⁶



³⁸⁶ LH II-III A refers to the approximate date of manufacture, rather than to the contexts in which the artefacts have been discovered. Motifs that are only attested sphragistically at a particular site are included on Map 3 if the material that impressed the sealing indicates that the impressing artefact was manufactured before the end of LH IIIA2. All locations used are approximate. The distribution is not weighted to reflect the number of attestations at a site.

Map 4: Distribution of the Eleven Motifs on the LH IIIA2/B-C Mainland³⁸⁷



³⁸⁷ Motifs that provide strong evidence for continued production in this period are highlighted in bold. Continued production is manifested in either the discovery of artefacts made from materials only commonly used after LH IIIA2 or indications of the sphragistic use of an artefact of such material. Italics are used to denote a motif that is only attested sphragistically *and* for which the material of the impressing artefact suggests the use of an heirloom.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHAPTER 2



Figure 1. VS.2.113. Male figure grasping lions (2.2.2).



Figure 2. VS.1B.62. Male figure restraining lions (2.2.2).



Figure 3. V.654. Female figure with frames flanked by griffins (2.3.1).



Figure 4. VI.314. Female figure flanked by griffins (2.3.3).

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHAPTER 3

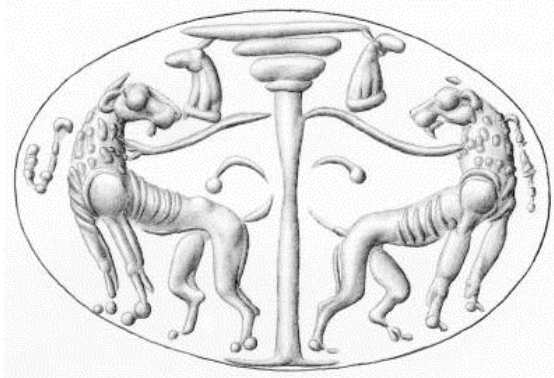


Figure 5. VI.364. Lions leashed to a pillar with sacral knots hanging from its cornice (3.2.4).



Figure 6. XI.196. Pillar with brackets flanked by long-horned goats (3.2.5).

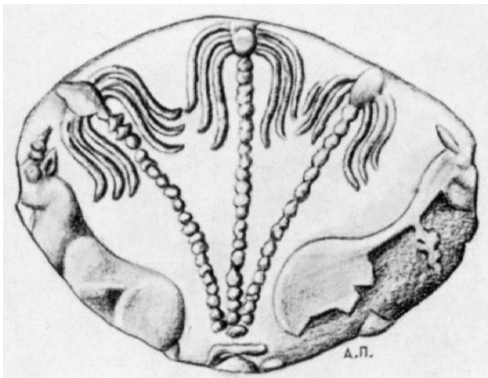


Figure 7. I.375. Triple palm flanked by short-horned bulls (3.3.3).



Figure 8. I.87. Fleur-de-lys tree flanked by sphinxes (3.3.5).



Figure 9. I.73. Incurved altar flanked by griffins. Impaled triangle on right (3.4.1).



Figure 10. II.8.326. Incurved altar flanked by dogs. Decorative elements above (3.4.2).

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHAPTER 4



Figure 11. X.261. Seated woman with a standing male. Anthropomorphic figure and branch-like element above (4.2.1).



Figure 12. The Great Goddess Ring. Seated woman with four standing female figures (4.2.3).



Figure 13. I.128. Seated figure restraining a griffin on a leash (4.3.1).



Figure 14. II.3.103. Seated woman with a monkey and standing female figure. Pillar on right and branch-like element and seed above (**4.3.2**).

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHAPTER 5

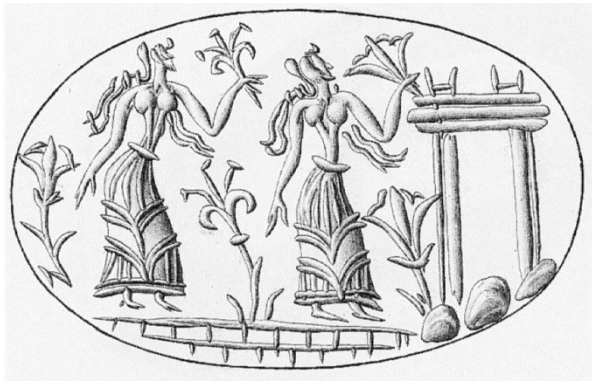


Figure 15. VS.1B.113. Two standing women with an entranceway. The woman on the left holds a lily and that on the right a papyrus flower. Two papyrus flowers and a lily rise up from the paved ground (5.2.1).



Figure 16. I.127. Two women flanking a structure and its surrounding enclosure (5.2.4).



Figure 17. VS.1A.75. Standing woman with an incurved altar topped with horns of consecration. Palm on left (5.3.3).

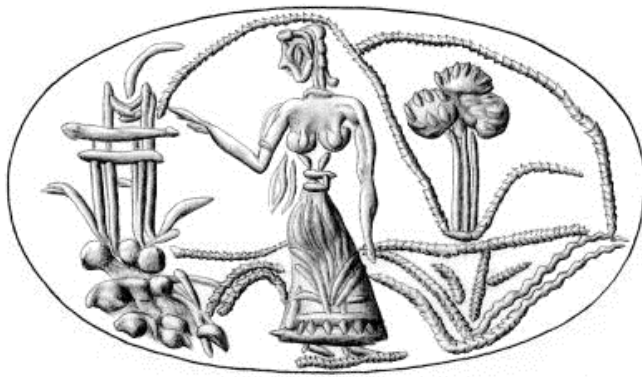


Figure 18. VI.279. Standing woman with an altar inspired by the iconography of tree-shrines. Tree on right (5.3.4).

ILLUSTRATIONS: CHAPTER 6



Figure 19. II.6.173. Bull in Pose A with standing man to the left and a knife, two conical rhyta, and horns of consecration above (6.2.2).



Figure 20. XI.52. Bull in Pose B with a knife in its neck and a palm leaning over its back (6.2.2).



Figure 21. I.221. Woman in Pose A carrying a ram (6.3.2).



Figure 22. XI.27. Woman in Pose B holding a goat (6.3.2).

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AA</i>	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
<i>AEGAEUM</i>	<i>Annales d'archéologie égéenne de l'Université de Liège</i>
<i>AfO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AM</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
<i>AR</i>	<i>Archaeological Reports</i>
<i>ArchEph</i>	<i>Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς</i>
<i>ASAtene</i>	<i>Annuario della Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente</i>
<i>BAR-IS</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports, International Series</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>BSA</i>	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
<i>CAJ</i>	<i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>
<i>Celebrations</i>	R. Hägg & G.C. Nordquist (eds.). 1990. <i>Celebrations of Death and Divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid. Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 11-13 June 1988</i> . Stockholm.
<i>CMS</i>	<i>Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel</i>
<i>CMS Beiheft 1</i>	W-D. Niemeier (ed.). 1981. <i>Studien zur minoischen und helladischen Glyptik. Beiträge zum 2. Marburger Siegel-Symposium 26-30 September 1978 (CMS Beiheft 1)</i> . Berlin.

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- JA EI* *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*
- JHS* *Journal of Hellenic Studies*
- JoPR* *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*
- MELETEMATA* P.P. Betancourt, V. Karageorghis, R. Laffineur, & W-D. Niemeier (eds.). 1999. *MELETEMATA. Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as He Enters his 65th Year, Vols. I-III* (AEGAEUM 20). Liège.

<i>OJA</i>	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>ÖJh</i>	<i>Jahreshefte des Österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien</i>
<i>OpAth</i>	<i>Opuscula Atheniensia</i>
<i>POLEMOS</i>	R. Laffineur (ed.). 1999. <i>POLEMOS. Le Contexte Guerrier en Égée à L'âge du Bronze. Actes de la 7^e Rencontre égéenne internationale (Liège, 14-17 avril 1998)</i> (AEGAEUM 19). Liège.
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